RUSSIA

-DAY AND YESTERDAY

Y DR. E.J. DILLON

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RUSSIA

TO-DAY AND YESTERDAY

AN IMPARTIAL VIEW OF SOVIET RUSSIA

BY DR. E. J. DILLON

47909

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GARDEN CITY 1930 NEW YORK

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TO

LOUISE WEISS

THE GIFTED CREATOR OF

"L'EUROPE NOUVELLE"

IN THE JOURNALISTIC WORLD AND ONE

OF THE GENIAL FOUNDERS OF A TRULY NEW EUROPE

IN THE POLITICO-SOCIAL WORLD

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PREFACE

My readers have a right to inquire under what circumstances I revisited Russia in the year 1928, and the following data constitute my recognition of their claim.

First and foremost I may say that my motive was solely sentimental. Having no friends or acquaintances among Sovietists, I applied for a visa in the ordinary way and, having complied with the usual formalities, I received it.

Nobody among the Sovietists knew anything about me. Nobody had an inkling of my career in Russia. Nobody was aware that I had been a professor at a Russian university, and subsequently a journalist working on the staffs of Russian and English newspapers. And nobody, not even myself, knew that I would ever record my impressions. Nor could I put pen to paper for months afterward, owing to the precarious state of my health.

I received no favors from anyone in Sovietdom, and expected none, unless I count the courtesy of Commissary Salkind who kindly gave me permission to view the Leningrad museums whenever I liked.

I went about when and where I liked, seeing priests and peasants, and so far as I know I was never once followed, but after the amazing story recorded in Chapter VIII, I should be very sorry to affirm this.

I intended to spend at least half a year in the Soviet Republics, and study other aspects of life there, but my health broke down completely, and two Soviet doctors whom I consulted insisted on my leaving at once.

Thus I owe the Sovietists nothing, whereas they owe me much: not only did they seize and confiscate my life savings, but indirectly they deprived me of one near and dear, whose loss all the money in the world cannot make good.

None the less, I honestly endeavored to forget these things for the time being, and to look upon the aims, achievements, and failures of the Bolshevists without prejudice. I hope I have succeeded.

E. J. D.

SARRIA, BARCELONA,
June-July, 1929

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RUSSIA:

TO-DAY AND YESTERDAY

CHAPTER I

WHY I DESIRED TO REVISIT RUSSIA

After an absence of fourteen years I set out with beating heart last autumn to revisit Russia, the country of my adoption, in which I had spent the greater part of a long life checkered with memorable experiences. The first of these occurred as far back as the year 1877, during the war with Turkey, when I was chased and captured as a presumptive Turkish spy by a group of half-drunken peasants here one Sunday afternoon in the province of Kieff. They had descried me from afar, as I sat alone in the steppe, poring over a Russian grammar in German and jotting down in a notebook difficult verbs and nouns. And their first impulse was to lynch me, not from excessive patriotic zeal, but in response to inherited instincts described by Gorky and characterized as primitive cruelty. While discussing ways and means one of their number—a sectarian, I believe, who abhorred violence and vodka—dissuaded them from irreparable ferocity for their own sakes. This adventure, which thus threatened to end in tragedy, caused me only a few hours' detention and the loss of my purse and its contents. The village elder—a burly, warmly clad, well-fed mooshik—called next day to offer his humble apologies for the treatment I had received. He also announced with gusto that two of the responsible villagers had received I forget how many lashes for their misconduct, and that some more were still to be flogged in my presence. He would drive me over, if I so desired. Of course I was indignant, and insisted

on the pardon of my unpunished captors, to which their representative ultimately gave his seemingly reluctant assent.

In the following year I exchanged the Ukrainian steppe for the Russian capital, and gradually my horizon widened and my sympathies expanded as I was admitted to the company of some of the history makers of the day. One such opportunity that came my way in the year following my arrival in St. Petersburg was my presentation by two influential friends to the Imperial Chancellor, Prince Gortschakoff, who after a rambling talk accepted me as a suitable candidate for the special school of Oriental languages maintained by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In that institution I was to be trained for two years or longer for Russian diplomacy or the consular service in the East. This, I was assured, was a rare privilege, and I can well believe it. At the time, however, being a thoughtless youth for whom no favors were equal to my deserts, I was insufficiently appreciative, and my undisguised lukewarmness gave offence. Shortly before the date fixed for my admission I was asked whether I had renounced my faith, which was that of the Roman Catholic Church, and my nationality, which was British. I jibbed at these conditions and resented the crude form of the question put to me concerning their fulfillment, although I ought not to have been surprised, for they would have seemed reasonable enough had I reflected a little on the whole subject; but I never gave a serious thought to it until I was dryly told that I must hurry up and make arrangements with the Orthodox priest and the Russian Home Office. Then, nettled and humiliated, I felt tempted to reject the conditions outright and give a sharp form to my behavior, but on the sound advice of one of my friends I repressed my wrath and replied that I would have to think the matter over a little longer and

would communicate my intention very shortly. To the authorities, however, this reply seemed answer enough, and it caused the project which had emanated from Kossowitch, Professor of Sanskrit, and a high dignitary—his friend—to be dropped forthwith. After this I fell in the estimation of two of the eminent men who had bestirred themselves in the matter.

I never met Prince Gortschakoff again, but it was suggested, I was afterward told, by him, that I should write an illuminating series of articles on the state of Ireland and political currents and undercurrents there, but all my time and attention being engrossed by my academical studies, the articles were never even begun. I matriculated in the Faculty of Oriental Languages in St. Petersburg, and frequented lectures on Sanskrit, Zend, ancient and modern Persian, Armenian, Hebrew, and Arabic. From my childhood onward the height of my ambition had been to obtain a chair in a university and to be wholly free to devote my life to philosophical, historical, and philological research. And now I was perceptibly nearing the longed-for bourne, for I was assured by those who wielded the power to realize my aspiration that if I passed the necessary examinations my election to a chair at the Imperial University of St. Petersburg would follow as a foregone conclusion.

In the meanwhile I became acquainted with men of mark in the capital and elsewhere. Of these Dostoyeffsky, whom some of my fellow students revered as an inspired prophet, was by far the most distinguished. I sometimes visited his flat in company with a relative of his wife, and thought little of the privilege at the time. I also made friends with Russia's greatest philosopher, Vladimir Solovieff, whose intimacy I enjoyed until his death; and I held converse with several cabinet ministers who played a transient part in Russian history, and as an offset, with a number of Nihilists,

some of whom I saved from prison by referring their cases to the Minister of the Interior or by hiding them from the police. Before I went up for my final examinations at the University of St. Petersburg, Dostoyeffsky passed away, and I was one of the few students privileged to carry his coffin out of his gloomy abode and one of the many thousands who followed it to his last resting place.

In spite of many difficulties I passed all my examinations, not merely with success but with a certain éclat, and at last stood in clear sight of my goal. Nothing now lay between me and the achievement of my life purpose. Already friends jokingly addressed me as "Professor." But one day some demon suddenly took possession of my brain, constraining me to play the fool and defeat the main purpose of my striving: I published a series of articles in the organ of the Academy, attacking the members of that body for blackballing Professor Mendeleyeff and electing a Swedish scholar named Backlund to the vacant armchair. A good deal of heat was engendered by the controversy that ensued, in which I took the leading part, championing Mendeleyeff; the principal newspapers supported me, but many of the academicians and university professors were angered by my arrogance. I then published another series of articles criticizing a scientific publication, the authors of which were the very professors who were to be the judges of my qualifications for the academical chair, and without whose good will I stood not the ghost of a chance of obtaining it. Having shown up the plagiarism of one and the blunders of another, I anticipated no reply, and there was none in the press; but as soon as my candidature for the chair at the university came up for discussion, which happened very shortly afterward, I was blackballed. There was a considerable minority in my favor, but only a minority, and as there was but one Faculty of Oriental Languages in the

whole Russian Empire, and it had thus refused me a professorship, I was left utterly stranded. All my previous examinations and degrees in the Oriental Faculty went for nothing. They were as if they had not been. The only course open to me now was to begin again at the lowest rung of the academical ladder in another faculty and to graduate there. This I finally did, despite formidable hindrances, choosing for the place of my ordeal the Imperial University of Kharkoff, where within a couple of years I received my degree. Six months later I became Privat-Dozent, and twelve months afterward I was unanimously elected to the Chair of Comparative Philology there.

Now at last I had reached the peaceful haven for which I had so wistfully yearned. Of this there was no reasonable doubt. I occupied a chair and belonged to the radical group of professors. But one day the government, grown aggressively reactionary, issued a decree depriving the universities of their autonomy, whereupon I resigned, together with several colleagues who refused to have their lectures curtailed and muddled by ignorant bureaucrats. I migrated to Odessa, joined the staff of the oldest daily press organ there, the *Odesski Vestnik,* and was afterwards offered the editorship of the Liberal daily paper, *Odesskia Novosti,* which I accepted. A year's successful work there drew the attention of the censor toward me, and he intimated that my further collaboration on the paper would be ruinous to the periodical and probably to its proprietor and myself. Checkmated by these tricks of destiny I abandoned the beautiful city on the Black Sea, returned to St. Petersburg, where I took a flat, and plunged into the whirl of Russian society under the ægis of the celebrated Princess ("Lison") Troubetzkoy, Countess Olga Levaschoff, and the wife of the Austrian Ambassador, Countess Wolkenstein-Trostburg. Thenceforward I led an enchanted life,

frequenting the gayest society of the northern capital, meeting in the salons of the leaders of fashion almost everybody of note in politics, art, science, and literature. Among my particular friends were the philosopher Vladimir Solovieff; the gifted novelist Leskoff; the painters Von Klever, Gay, Yaroshenko, Makoffsky, and Shishkin; and the statesman Count Witte. I was also on friendly terms with the painter Repin, and with the family of the Prince of Montenegro, who translated some Russian sketches of mine; the Metropolitan Archbishop of St. Petersburg and Finland, Isodor, for whom I wrote important letters to Anglican dignitaries on the Union of the Churches; Archbishops Plato of Kieff and Michael of Serbia; Count Leo Tolstoy in Yassnaya Polyana. During my intercourse with him I discerned aspects of his character hardly known to the reading world, and I could contribute an interesting chapter to his biography. Among my acquaintances were also Countess Alexis Tolstoy in St. Petersburg, Count Orloff-Denisoff and his interesting mother, who was the most famous raconteuse of her time and had enjoyed the friendship of four Czars. I also knew the mother of Prince Yussupoff (the future assassin of Rasputin), and I met personally two Czars and Czaritzas.

In spite of the time necessarily lost in the whirl of Vanity Fair the experience had great advantages. It gave me an insight into aspects of Russian life which undoubtedly had a deep-reaching influence on the revolutionary movement. Some people in the fashionable set were wont to begin the day between noon and 2 P. M. Count Orloff-Denisoff rose habitually at 3 P. M., retired to rest at 9 P. M., to rise again at, say, 11—if he was not going to a theater—and to repair to the first of the balls about midnight. I say "first," because on some nights in the height of the season one managed to *faire acte de présence* at three

such functions, and often the rosy-colored dawn vainly sought to shame us while we were still at supper. The periodical festivities organized by the officers of the Guards, at which the Czar was about to appear, were conducted with decorous pomp, while those given in the Winter Palace were soul-entrancing visions of fairyland. The round of dissipation, and the delicate refinement peculiarly Russian that imparted to it an esthetic touch, were irresistibly seductive, and for three consecutive seasons I yielded myself up to its charm—not, however, without occasional qualms of conscience and moments of bitter remorse. My health also began to show signs of wear and tear, which I rectified by avoiding excess, eating sparingly, drinking moderately, keeping all my pleasures, whatever they might be, within reasonable bounds, and contriving to devote a few hours every day to reading. The one excess into which I ran was smoking. Countless Turkish cigarettes, at which I kept puffing away day and night, afflicted me with insomnia and poisoned my system gradually.

After a time this kind of existence began to pall upon me, and I resolved to turn over a new leaf. I first took to employing a few hours daily in composing articles on Russian literature and history and in translating some of the writings of Tolstoy at his own desire. As I have already said, my dealings with that eminent man supply materials for an interesting chapter of paralipomena to his biography which may soon be written. Many of my articles appeared in the principal reviews of London and New York, some few in the *Daily Telegraph,* and in the year 1886 I was appointed to be the St. Petersburg correspondent of that newspaper, which was then and for many years subsequently forbidden in Russia, on account of its attitude in the war between Turkey and the Czardom.

I also wrote for other publications over various pseudo-

nyms: "E. B. Lanin" and "The Author of the *Policy of the Pope*" being the best known. My book *Russian Characteristics,* which I signed with the pen name "E. B. Lanin," created somewhat of a sensation in Europe and the United States, where it was pirated. The first character sketch of the Czar Nicholas II, which portrayed him realistically, was also my work. It was published in a sequence of articles in the *Quarterly Review,* the *National Review,* and the *English Review.* The publication of those articles was risky, owing to the attempts persistently made in London to reveal my identity and incite the Czarist authorities to expel me from the country.

In the meanwhile my relations with Count (then Mr.) Witte extended in various directions. In the fullness of time I became his confidant and his private adviser. I accompanied him at his own request, but at the expense of the *Daily Telegraph,* to Portsmouth (U. S. A.), whither he went to negotiate peace with Japan. Before our departure I was charged by him in the name of the Russian government to request the Japanese government to appoint Marquis Ito instead of Count Komura to be the chief of its mission, and also to empower that famous statesman to conclude an offensive and defensive alliance with Russia instead of a mere treaty of peace. This audacious plan would have made Russia's foreign policy very different from what it became, but the Japanese were not prepared for it at the time. At Portsmouth I worked unceasingly with Count Witte,[1] and also a little with President Roosevelt. Back in the Czardom I witnessed the revolutionary agitation for a constitution and received the public thanks of the revolutionary press for my contribution to its success. After the creation of the Duma I stood by my friend

[1] A book published recently in Pekin by ex-Ambassador Korostovets describes with accuracy my work at Portsmouth.

Count Witte through thick and thin, recognizing in him a genial worker in the midst of a crowd of word weavers, a constructor among levelers, a statesman among petti-fogging politicians. Our friendship remained unaltered down to the dav of his death.

CHAPTER II

ST. PETERSBURG AND LENINGRAD. REMINISCENCES

I LEFT the capital in 1914 for Bucharest and Albania, and on the same day Witte went to Germany for medical treatment, and I never set eyes on him any more, nor did I see Russia again until the autumn of 1928, when my longing to revisit the country in which I had spent the best years of my life overcame the formidable obstacles which my failing health presented, and I set out alone for Leningrad and Moscow. My visit had no controversial object, no pet theory to demonstrate. The fact that I am a creditor of the Soviet government, which confiscated nearly everything I possessed—the savings of a lifetime—did not enter into my calculations. I went to view things as they are and not as I might deem that they ought to be. For good or for evil the new order of things is established in the country that once was Russia, but is now become the Union of the Sovietist Republics, and I am neither disposed nor competent to cast its horoscope.

The route I chose was via Finland, a country with which I had been very familiar in olden times and for which I still entertain a genuine affection. In externals I found Suomi, as it is called by its own people, almost the same as fourteen years ago, but in spirit it had undergone a radical change. The nation is now one and indivisible, prosperous, well governed, and fairly happy. It attracts a considerable number of tourists. On our arrival in Helsingfors I drove to the principal hotel, in which I was wont to put up in

bygone days, but was told that there were no rooms free there. I next repaired to another and still another with the same result, until I had vainly tried seven hotels. Thanks to an influential friend I finally obtained middling accommodation in a second-class establishment, most of the hotels being in repair and therefore practically nonexistent.

I was struck and edified by certain of the tacit manifestations of the new spirit which attest the unity of the people. I had been away from Helsingfors since the month of June, 1914, when a large percentage of the population spoke Russian fluently. A still larger bilingual percentage was to be found in Vyborg and the country along the Russian frontier. To-day the bilingual elements—excluding those who speak Swedish—has vanished. Nobody speaks or is supposed to understand Russian, not even those who knew it so thoroughly fourteen years ago. I tempted some to bring out their latent knowledge, but they ignored my luring efforts and resorted to the language of signs. Once in a while my perseverance was rewarded with an answer in racy Russian, but it was preceded with a request that I would not reveal this philological backsliding to anyone. "Is it an offence, then?" I queried. "No. There's no law against speaking Russian, but, all the same, it's unlucky. Those who do it repent. Finnish is our mother tongue and should be good enough for us."

It is fair to say that no country in Europe has made as much of its political opportunities as Suomi. Nor were any of the new states as ripe for independence. It lives within its means, pays scot and lot, and minds its own business. Heavy sacrifices are willingly made for defensive purposes, but its policy is pacific. The democracy there has been accused of fickleness because it has had no less than sixteen changes of government within ten years. And this bald statement has doubtless a sinister sound; but knowledge of

the facts attest that this quick succession of governing bodies, unlike that of other countries—twenty-five in Jugoslavia—betokens merely the ups and downs of parliamentary strategy, not bitter struggles of contending parties for the realization of radical changes or the triumph of subversive ideas.

The process of fusing the elements of the population into one homogeneous people, simple and facile by its nature, is progressing satisfactorily. The sonorous language of Suomi has already spread over the entire country; and so jealous are the authorities of this precious bond of union that they have recently purged it of European terms such as "telegraph" "telephone," "aëroplane," "automobile," etc., and substituted newly forged Finnish equivalents. To this the only drawback is that the foreigner at railway stations and other public places looks in vain for some indication over the many doors to guide him, and is often at a loss to ascertain his bearings. Even geographical names have been thrown into the philological crucible, and taken out modified: for example Helsingfors, Vyborg are become Helsinki, Viipuri, respectively.

The journey from Viipuri to Leningrad is really a matter of only two hours, but since the war it consumes five, owing to passport and luggage examinations. At the last Finnish station travelers leave the train, and with all their hand luggage repair to the Custom House where they await their heavy baggage, all of which undergoes examination. When this ordeal, followed by the passport inspection, is over, the train moves forward for a few minutes, and then stops at the first station on the territory of the Soviets, where it tarries a long while, for the frontier tests applied here are many and tedious. There is the passport examination, the combing of the contents of trunks and suitcases, and the calculation of the tourist's loose financial holdings,

etc. No one is allowed under any pretext to bring Soviet money into the country. All foreign coin, checks, etc., which the traveler may have with him must be accurately declared, whereupon he receives an official paper entitling him on his return journey to take out of the country an amount not exceeding the sum he brought in. He next has to interview the representative of the State Bank, whose office is in another building, in order to exchange a portion of his foreign money for bank notes of the Soviet government, the rate of exchange being greatly to the advantage of the latter. It is worth noting that the officials of every department are far more civil and obliging than those of western European lands.

When the signal to go ahead was given at last, I discovered that the train was conveying only two travelers to the city of Leningrad: a Finn unfamiliar with the Russian tongue, and myself. I now employed my time in looking out for familiar landmarks. Between the years 1877 and 1914 I had journeyed from Vyborg to St. Petersburg and back scores of times, and had also spent months at various stations in summer and in winter, so that I knew every rood of the country, which in those days was dotted over with wooden houses, most of them occupied by Russian families. And now I eagerly looked out for those which I knew best. But on the Finnish side of the frontier they had all gone, other and statelier villas having taken their place. At the close of the war the Finnish State had decreed that houses whose owners failed to appear or to keep them in repair would be taken over by the government at a moderate valuation and the proceeds kept a certain time for the owner. In consequence of this law the entire face of the country is changed for the better. I was thus passing now through an unfamiliar land. While I meditated on the instability of things terrestrial the train pulled

up at Leningrad, and I was soon standing and shivering outside the Finnish railway station, over which a withering north wind was blowing and howling and compelling the few droshky drivers and porters who were in waiting to double themselves up and cower in windproof nooks and corners. Four half-frozen chauffeurs shuffled up to me; each one in turn whispered in my ear and insinuatingly offered to take me and my belongings to the hotel for a sum about three times the pre-war price. I glanced at them reprovingly and repressed my feelings. Just then the hotel porter coming up and addressing them said: "It's no use to try it on with him. He speaks Russian and knows his way about." After this I soon came to terms with two of the four chauffeurs, to the disgust of the other pair, who kept hurling picturesque invectives at their comrades in the old traditional style until, my Jehu having swung himself into the creaking vehicle, I was whirled along the street out of earshot of their abuse.

The cold was intense, especially when crossing the Neva; and I felt it keenly, my warm clothing having remained in my trunk. But the icy blast did not hinder me from taking stock of the sights and sounds that greeted eye and ear. I noticed that the streets were somewhat worse paved than of yore, and their holes and hillocks caused the ramshackle old motor to jog and jolt insupportably. Once I was nearly hoisted clean out of the vehicle. At last, blue with the cold, I reached the Hôtel d'Europe, and to my surprise was recognized and welcomed by some of those newly made citizens who in the unregenerate days of the Czardom had been waiters, lackeys, porters, etc., and still continue to exercise their former calling, but with fitting limitations and in a more dignified spirit. They bade me welcome quite fraternally, and after the presentation and analysis of my passport, which is the most precious talisman a

traveler can carry with him in this era of universal brotherhood, I was escorted to an apartment in which I had sometimes stayed in bygone days, and there I was left to my musings.

Here now at last, after fourteen years' absence, I am once more in the city of Peter Alexeyvitch, surnamed the Great, which sprang up as by enchantment, and the building of which, like that of the Pyramids of Egypt, cost thousands of human lives. Such sacrifices were, as it chanced, in accordance with secular tradition. Formerly it was a custom, inherited from pagan times, to immure men and women alive in the foundations of Russian cities, by way of ensuring the town's future growth and prosperity; but in Peter's embryonic capital the pestilential climate, the severe privations, and the noxious exhalations caused the death of whole armies of workmen, who were, so to say, engulfed in the swamp as in a Serbonian bog, and an uncanny legend was afterward whispered about behind closed doors to the effect that that awful holocaust hung like a curse over the gorgeous palaces, noble rivers, and labyrinthine canals of St. Petersburg and would one day exact a terrible retribution from the family of the imperial founder. The first concrete move toward the fulfillment of this malison originated in a group of military noblemen who hatched the Dekabrist Plot[1] against the autocratic rule of Czar Nicholas I. The Emperor had five of the conspirators hanged and many banished to Siberia, where they underwent terrible privations, and the spirit of his discontented subjects was cowed for a while. But the movement once begun was never again arrested. Tardy concessions and prompt measures of repression were equally fruitless. The next disturbance was occasioned by the arrest, trial, and condem-

[1]December-men, so called because the plot was timed to break out in December (1825).

nation, first to death and afterward to Siberia, of a group of literary youths of liberal tendencies, among them Dostoyeffsky, who, strangely enough, felt grateful ever after to the Czar for the rare spiritual opportunity afforded him by this unique experience.

I was a student of the St. Petersburg University when the next conspiracy was organized. Its originators were the members of a revolutionary society called "Land and Liberty." It included in its ranks many of my comrades, who were constantly running grave risks in consequence, every step of theirs being known to the police. I was able to save several of those young idealists, first in the capital while I was graduating, and afterward in the Ukraine, when I had become professor, a couple of my students at the Imperial University of Kharkoff being local leaders of the secret society, and objects of the vigilance of the police. One of these undergraduates, when thanking me for having rescued him from Siberia, asked me insistently to crown my kindness by allowing him to have all his illegal correspondence forwarded to my name and address!

Of all subsequent machinations and repressions St. Petersburg was the invariable scene and center. I was a witness of the doings and strivings of most of them, and stood fairly close to those chiefs of the revolutionary societies who were not actual Terrorists. Of a couple of thrilling episodes I might call myself the protagonist, and I was for some months under suspicion of being myself a member of the party of "Land and Liberty," having been denounced as such by a cousin of one of my chums. In consequence of this treacherous calumny all my letters were seized in the post, my examinations in Kharkoff University had to be put off, and I might have incurred arrest and expulsion over and above, but for the intervention of the Minister of the Interior.

Those curious types of lifelong plotters, male and female, who worked to undermine the Czars' throne, beginning with the Nihilists described by Turghenieff and ending with the Workmen's Councils organized by Lenin, formed a gallery of living portraits that fascinated me. In dismal rooms in shabby streets I spent hours with them discussing Marx and Buckle, smoking cigarettes, drinking weak tea, and pretending not to notice grave transgressions against the conventions. Father Gapon, the Orthodox priest who got up the vast demonstration before the Winter Palace at the beginning of 1905, was one of the most baffling types I ever met. I hope to give my impression of him in my memoirs. What impressed me most of all was the fact that the entire period of the evolution of liberalism into terrorism, say from the year 1860 down to the October Revolution, was dominated by a single political dogma: the need of a revolution and a constitution, and in the light of that credo every new social, scientific, political, and literary idea was judged. The man of letters who swerved from that canon was an outlaw whom no literary qualities, however marvelous, could redeem. Many a writer was ostracized in spite of his brilliant talents—my friend Leskoff was one of these—because, unlike the crowd, he was not an orthodox Liberal.

My memory filled with reminiscences, I soon sallied out from my spacious apartment, which had a fine view of the garden in front of the Russian Museum, to catch a glimpse of the dethroned capital, and within half a minute I stood in the center of the fine broad thoroughfare known to me as the Neffsky Prospekt, but now called "Prospekt of the 29th October." As I beheld the town hall, the fire tower, the arcades, and the Gostinny Dvor—all once familiar landmarks, but now enwrapped in a strange exotic atmosphere —I again fell into a trance of meditation, in which athwart

the mist of years faded memories became bright and forgotten episodes took concrete shape, floating before my mind's eye like ghosts of friends long dead.

The Neffsky Prospekt was the first street of the Russian capital that unfolded itself to my admiring gaze half a century previously when I stepped briskly from the Nikolai Railway Station on my arrival from the south. The sun's noonday rays were dazzling, the breeze was tepid, on all sides the ice and snow were thawing fast, and a forefeeling of the advent of spring was in the air. In harmony with the springlike charm of the day the fairest flowers of my youthful hopes and illusions were opening up and expanding within my breast. So blithe and buoyant was I on that occasion that, as the Russians put it, the ocean seemed hardly up to my knees. I halted opposite the spot on which I am now standing and entered a modest barber's shop which has long since disappeared. The Figaro within was a ruddy, jolly German, who received me as a brother, gave me detailed directions how to find the abode of my future professor on the other bank of the noble river Neva, and amicably warned me against wily Russian droshky drivers. It was at that corner over there that soon afterward I stood for hours awaiting the arrival of the "victorious" troops commanded by the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaivitch senior in the war with Turkey, who were to make their solemn entry into the capital. And I saw them march in, weary, languid, and woebegone, to the music of fifes and drums, which struck up a dismal German beerhouse tune: "Der deutsche liebt Tu-wak-wak-wak." In front of the Kazan Cathedral here—one of the historic temples which is still a place of Orthodox worship —I tarried and watched the reception given by Czar Alexander II to the first Persian Shah who visited Russia, of whom it was recounted that when a military con-

cert was given in his honor he, by way of showing his appreciation of Russian music, politely requested a repetition of the first piece he had heard. The flattered musicians long failed to discover it until after several vain efforts one of them sarcastically suggested that His Majesty might possibly have mistaken the tuning up of their instruments for one of the items of the musical program. "Let's act on the supposition," cried another. And they did. They were on the right track, for scarcely had they recommenced the process of tuning when His Majesty's eyes sparkled and his head nodded approval.

In that side street opposite the Kazan Cathedral I dwelt as a student in a modest room over the police station—one of the safest spots in the Empire just then—and I occasionally took advantage of that unique strategic position and gave asylum to hunted comrades who came to me laden with revolutionary literature at which I never even glanced. And they invariably expected and received, besides a shakedown for the night, cigarettes, sausages, and vodka. One of those youthful apostles of Nihilism, as it was then termed, nearly got me into trouble: the janitor of the house noticed his comings-in and goings-out, his high boots, red shirt, and unconventional gait, and reported them to the police, who fortunately for me refused to believe that anyone could have the audacity to harbour political suspects in their own abode and above their own office. I got word of the denunciation, and making a peace offering to the proselytizing student, requested him to give me a wide berth for the future. He kept away from my abode, but would waylay me of a morning and, coming up with me over there at the Swiss watch and clock shop, ask me for a loan. I made a point of helping that happy-go-lucky votary of revolution and science who, like many of his comrades, spouted balderdash whenever he found

a listener and made loud-sounding speeches on matters he did not understand. I remember him as he once entered our room at the university where several students were assembled, and, alluding to a celebrated professor of the Faculty of Law whose course he was supposed to be attending, said: "Professor Gradoffsky is a downright humbug. His ideas won't stand the test of scientific criticism and I am not going to listen to them." Many of his hearers applauded him warmly, although all of them knew full well that he had not been more than once or twice at that professor's lectures and had no clear idea of the subject treated. But he was always sprightly and bright, luring luck to his side for a long time, for although almost always laden with seditious leaflets, proclamations, and periodicals, whenever the police laid hands on him he chanced to have no compromising papers whatever on his person. One day, however, he was caught red handed, imprisoned, and then dispatched to the province of Kieff with a so-called "wolf's passport," which made it known to all and sundry that the authorities had their eye upon him, compelling him to reside in one spot and forbidding him to visit any other and refusing to allow him access to any university.

Higher up in a side street to the right stands the house in which I visited Dostoyeffsky. As I have already stated, on the Saturday of his historic public funeral I helped to carry his coffin from the apartment in which it lay. And on the evening of that memorable day I was solemnly betrothed according to Russian Orthodox rites to my first wife. On another occasion I was strolling along the Neffsky with my professor and friend, Patkanoff, looking at shop windows and indulging in speculation as to the future of Russia and its capital. "It's a disgrace," exclaimed my companion, "that in the principal street of such a great city the authorities should tolerate such abominable noisome

wooden houses like those over there," and he pointed to two low vile abodes in wood, worthy of a fifth-rate provincial town. Ten years later not a trace of them was to be seen. A palace stands in their places to-day. One momentous Saturday afternoon, as Patkanoff and I, in the course of our usual outing on the Neffsky, had reached the corner of the Morskaya Street, we, and all the moving public, were suddenly stopped by the police, and immediately afterward the Czar Alexander II, attired in his general's uniform, flitted past us in his sleigh like a scene in a dream. We all uncovered our heads, and a couple of minutes later the Emperor was in his palace. "I would not exchange places with that man for anything in the world," remarked my professor. "Why not?" I queried. "Because thousands of his subjects are doing their best to kill him, and one of them may succeed at any moment." "Is there any special danger just now?" I asked. "Yes, and it seems to me to be very near indeed. I learn from the palace that a conspiracy with wide ramifications is afoot, the object of which is to assassinate him now. Now! Some of the chief plotters are already in prison, but others—a woman among them—are still at liberty. Loris Melikoff[1] is at his wit's end."

For the next day (Sunday, March 1st, old style) I had a rendezvous with Patkanoff in that corner building there opposite the public library. It was then the highest edifice in the street. Of course, I kept the engagement, and I was with him at the moment when the house, which was thoroughly mined, was to have been blown to atoms as the Emperor passed by in his sleigh. But happily for us the Czar suddenly changed his route, driving home from the riding school along the Catherine Canal, on the bank of which he

[1]An Armenian general who had commanded the Russian troops in Asia Minor during the war with Turkey and was now the Czar's factotum.

was mortally wounded by a couple of bombs thrown by one of the revolutionaries whose aim and object was to obtain a political constitution—such a constitution as had already been drafted by Loris Melikoff, approved and signed by Alexander II unknown as yet to the nation, and was to be promulgated in a day or two! A few days later I was in the house of the Comptroller General on the Neffsky on the night when it became known that Petersburg was closed by a cordon of troops whose function it was to turn back all who should attempt to leave the city. Over and over again I traversed the Neffsky Prospekt on my way to the Alexandro-Neffsky Lavra to visit my friend the spiritual head of the Orthodox Church and to write letters for him in English to eminent Anglicans on the union of the churches and other ecclesiastical matters.

The celebrated Russian novelist Leskoff and I were wont to saunter along the Neffsky in fine weather to seek out certain Tartar friends of his in the Alexander Market and to debate with them on polygamy, its advantages and drawbacks as experienced by Moslems, and various other interesting topics, in leisurely fashion. From them I learned that torture was sometimes practised by the police on nonpolitical prisoners. I accompanied the body of Alexander III from the railway station yonder to his last resting place in the fortress of Peter and Paul, walking behind the chief mourners. After the marriage of the Czar Nicholas II, I stood opposite his palace and listened with disgust to the coarse and scurrilous utterances of the public, shouted at the top of their voices and addressed to the imperial pair. Later on I watched the soldiers marching along the Neffsky on the way to defeat and death in Manchuria, shielded by icons and talismans and led by generals who hated each other more intensely than they disliked the

enemy. And the sight called up memories of the troops I had seen returning "triumphant" from Turkey in the year 1878 to the tune of "Der Deutsche liebt Tuwak."

I spent a great part of the historic night of the Saturday, the eve of Bloody Sunday, with Maxim Gorky and various others, hurrying off now to Witte's private house, now to newspaper offices, or to the ministry in which Prince Svyatopolk Mirsky attended to the affairs of his country. For two nights I sacrificed my sleep and stayed up writing a full telegraphic account of this first phase of the Revolution. I had driven along the Neffsky on the Friday before Bloody Sunday to question and report upon the Russian priest, Gapon, and I well remember the uneasy feelings with which on my return I mused on the interview and afterward published unfavorable judgment on the man, offending thereby a number of his stanch friends and mine.

I saw him in secret on the following Sunday, when the entire population was up and about, and two hundred thousand workmen turned out to demand from the Czar a complete change of régime. After having witnessed the mowing down of men, women, and children in the morning, I got into another warm place near the palace where the soldiers used bullets and whips unmercifully. I beheld a student totter and fall, and his comrade trying to lift him, and hastening to his aid we both got him out of the crowd, put him on a droshky, and held him between us. Near the public library I met my son, who the moment he espied us, turned as white as a sheet. "He's dead," he cried. We then looked at our fellow passenger and saw that he was no more.

Scores of times subsequently I crossed the Prospekt with Count Witte in his Mercedes car or in my Panhard Levassor to the Council of the Empire. On the historic day when the

Duma was proclaimed I contemplated for hours from Witte's study the madness of the mob who had committed wanton crimes, and run amok by way of exercising and enjoying the precious acquisition of liberty. I beheld windows smashed, carriages battered, policemen knocked down and trampled on, officers stripped of their epaulettes, deprived of their swords and kicked and mauled unmercifully to the accompaniment of shouts of approval and exhortations to go ahead with the work of purging the population in this manner.

During the Duma period I was continually with Witte, Prince Al. Obolensky, Stolypin, Durnovo, Ambassador Nicolson, the Polish deputies, and other leading men. I may say without overrating my modest achievements that I forecast the fate of each of the dumas with a degree of accuracy which surprised all Europe and Russia. When the cabinet ministers, the Russian Ambassador in Paris and the Prime Minister Stolypin assured the world that the Second Duma was destined to live long and work fruitfully, I said and repeated in the *Daily Telegraph*: "Not later than Sunday next the Duma will have ceased to exist." And it did, in spite of their honest convictions, flat denials, and wholehearted exertions. In those stirring times the streets leading to the Taurida Palace, where the Duma had its sittings, were not a whit better than they are to-day: the tires of my motor often burst and were uncommonly short lived, and on one occasion a wheel came off in consequence of a dive taken by the vehicle into a hole in the street.

Thus for me the Neffsky is the embodiment of Russian history in wood and stone and glass from the period of Nicholas I to the October Revolution. I myself saw the tottering autocracy become a parliamentary body of feeble talkers and then pass on through cruel civil war followed by bloody reprisals to the dictatorship of the spokesmen of the

proletariat. All these changes are summarized in that of the name of the Neva city into Leningrad and the Neffsky Prospekt into the "Prospekt of the 29th October."

The change from Petrograd[1] to Leningrad commemorates the attainment of the negative aim of generations of Russian revolutionaries, marks the tragic end of the Russian Empire, and inaugurates the most fateful politico-social experiment ever made in human history. The glorious city on the Neva's banks happening to summarize Lenin's achievements received his pseudonymous name. St. Petersburg was the scene of his secret plannings and frequent failures from the last decade of the Nineteenth Century down to his stupendous triumph in the October Revolution, and the grateful spokesmen of the proletariat showed their sense of gratitude by abolishing the names of the unregenerate capital which were identified with oppression and bloodshed, and bestowing upon it that by which the laureled leader elected to be known. For the October Revolution (1917), although prepared unconsciously by foolish monarchists, was largely Lenin's own work. I well remember the small beginnings of his activities and in particular the society he formed for the "Emancipation of the Working Class" and then the great strike of 30,000 weavers which struck terror to the hearts of the few statesmen who were honestly working for the preservation of the Czardom. The sons of certain friends of mine, some of them students, were known to dabble in those illegal doings, and on and off they were seized by the police, kept for a brief while in jail and then set free. The 1903 Congress that split the Social-Democratic party into Mensheviks and Bolsheviks provided Lenin with his coming high pedestal as leader of the latter wing. Thenceforward

[1]The Russian equivalent for St. Petersburg given to the capital during the World War.

life in the capital was constantly disturbed by strikes which upset normal conditions, exposed the utter incapacity of the authorities and made the weakness of the Czarist régime visible to all.

The war with Japan—one of the most heinous crimes of the Czardom—and the defeat of the Russian army gave a fillip to the revolutionary cause of which Lenin was not slow to avail himself. The imposing demonstration of a quarter of a million workmen before the Winter Palace (Bloody Sunday, January 9, 1905), and the blood wantonly shed by the troops in the various streets and squares of St. Petersburg, widened the chasm between the governing and the governed. These events gave the working men an advantage the like of which they had never enjoyed before. The numbers of the Bolshevist party grew, their influence expanded and became more intense, their secret allies in the government offices, the Church, and the palace were many and active, and the first Workmen's Soviet of St. Petersburg was called into being. I was in touch with a few of that circle, and had frequent talks with Count Witte as to the most efficacious way to deal with them. Witte's attitude toward the Soviets which provoked the choler of the Conservatives reminded me of that of Julius Cæsar toward Catiline and his fellow conspirators. For two months the Russian Premier left them to their own devices and declined to have them taken into custody on the ground that the movement was not yet ripe, and then suddenly he had the members arrested, imprisoned, and their plans thwarted.

In all these and subsequent events the leading subversive rôle was played by the Russian capital. It was there that on the eve of the World War a rebellion broke out which was quickly quelled by the government, and after one of Lenin's many flying visits to Russia from abroad the prole-

tarian organizer convened a meeting of the soldiers' and workmen's Soviet, unfolded his plan of campaign against the capitalists of the Empire and then as before vanished into night. When the propitious day dawned at last, Lenin was transported by the Germans in a sealed wagon like some wonderful new war engine to the capital now yclept Petrograd, and from that time on he trained the mutinous soldiers and working men, and led them against the bourgeoisie who had no leader worthy of the name, and the October Revolution which overthrew the Czardom recognized Petrograd as the most enterprising city in Sovietdom and linked its new name with the pseudonymous surname of the proletariat's victorious leader—the immortality conferred by Bolshevism.

And standing now in front of the Kazan Cathedral, contrasting past with present, I felt that since Medea cut a tough old ram to pieces, boiled these in her caldron, and then took out a frisky young lamb, no such amazing metamorphosis was known even to legendary lore. To-day the Prospekt is structurally as it was fourteen years ago, but the impression it makes is no longer what it used to be. The middle of the street where I stationed myself at first was so empty that you might fire a rifle, perhaps even a machine gun along the center without harming any living being. A dreary air of desolation intensified by the cold and rain pervaded the noble thoroughfare which in its palmy days used to be thronged with brilliant never-ending processions of the principal classes and masses of the Empire according to the time of day or night. Foreign visitors were delighted in the afternoon with the gay processions of ambassadorial carriages, the gorgeous plumage of their chasseurs, the grand-ducal turn-outs, the smart droshkies with their fantastically attired long-bearded drivers, the graceful troikas drawn by three spirited horses skimming along the

street, the becoming uniforms of the officers of the Guards, the picturesque raiment of Caucasian princes and of Far Eastern visitors. The alluringly dressed shops on either side of the street with their cunning display of Oriental carpets, Indian cloths of gold, silks, and brocades, silver filigree articles, jeweled walking sticks, and curious baubles from Persia, Bokhara, and the Caucasus—in a word, most of the attractions that formerly made St. Petersburg the gayest and most imposing city in Europe had vanished like a summer cloud. Ugly marks of the ravages of the civil war catch the eye and offend the esthetic sense: broken plate glass, nailed-up windows and doors, scaffoldings used to screen ugly ruins. Right in front of me stands the once famous Dutch church in which sermons of an Arminian flavor were preached in German and drew large congregations of cultured people, but now it is a shabby skeleton of an edifice in the hands of professional housebreakers. Lower down on the opposite side of the thoroughfare stands the palace of the Stroganoffs, one of whose ancestors won Siberia for Muscovy and was rewarded with a title and vast landed property. And now the once imposing pile has dropped in the scale of architectural values, needing thorough repair within and without, and has a mean, neglected appearance.

It is fair to say that other causes besides civil war contributed to these unpleasant sights. The stucco of the buildings, many of which were erected by Italian architects, and were from the outset wholly unsuited to the Northern climate, is rapidly peeling off, and for lack of repairs imparts to the historic palaces and private houses an air of downright shabbiness. Here and there damaged houses are still as they were left ten years ago by the guns; uncomely scaffolding hides the discolored façades of fine palaces, and the pavements and sidewalks are uneven. In short, despite

the construction of several new and imposing edifices, the process of degrading St. Petersburg from its high rank as capital of an empire to the state of a provincial city inaugurated by Time and the Soviets is in full swing, and evokes melancholy reflections in persons who like myself have still retained their feeling of attachment to familiar places.

One of the first things that claimed my notice was the absence of beggars who in old times were always and everywhere with us. One of the few I now detected singled me out, followed me discreetly, eyeing me now and again in a way that reminded me of the glad eye, only that his was a sad eye. At last choosing the psychological moment when nobody was near he whispered his tale of woe into my ear briefly and suasively, and the response was as he expected. For small mercies he was extremely grateful, so too were a couple of others of his ilk who succeeded him and followed his example.

Another improvement which made a deep impression upon me as bordering on the miraculous was the entire absence of public women on the streets. This must not be taken to mean that sexual irregularities have been eliminated from the cities and towns of Sovietdom as by the waving of a magician's wand. Very far from that, and herein lies the clue to the apparent miracle. It connotes a state of things that would take one's breath away in pre-war times, but is known as the new morality to-day. It is a direct consequence of Bolshevist legislation which has struck all sexual misdemeanors out of the criminal code, and resolved that the State will never again take cognizance of any offenses against sexual morality, denies in fact that there is any such thing as sexual morality.

I noticed among the lighter changes that the soldiers of the Red army wore uniforms much longer than those of

Czarist days, so long indeed that some of them actually touched the ground, the object being to protect them more efficaciously against the inclemency of the weather. For the Red army men are objects of paternal solicitude to the government. They and theirs enjoy many privileges denied to other sections of the population. The police, too, were well and warmly clad, but they no longer sport the costly astrakhan caps which were prescribed for them by Alexander III whose ukase sent up the price of astrakhan fur three or four hundred per cent. overnight. The Russian soldier and policeman were always fine specimens of clean healthy manhood, somewhat primitive and uncouth. Their former good qualities they seemingly retain to-day despite the influence of famine, civil war, and other calamities that have passed over them, and they have acquired others in addition to those. The amusing stories once narrated of their Bœotian simplicity would no longer be credited of them at present. They look and are much more wide awake, more brisk, sharp-witted, and better capable of using their judgment with effect in cases of unforeseen difficulties. From these observations it would be unfair to draw conclusions as to the spirit or the training of the troops. On that subject I am no judge. It is enough to know that the percentage of peasants in the army is very considerable and that the capacity, endurance, and other inborn and acquired qualities of the individuals will characterize the entire body throughout. The mooshik is a fixed quantity, so to say; his mind may be sharpened, his knowledge increased, and his experience extended, but the groundwork of his character is permanent, unchanged, and unchangeable.

Those superficial impressions were rapidly received or renewed while I stood still or tried to wend my way toward the Neva. But it was no easy matter to stand still or to

saunter about, for the crowds pushed me forward and backward like a shuttlecock. Several trams rushed by and aroused my curiosity, but the passengers were so numerous that they clustered in and around the wagons, hanging on like swarms of bees, and looking so sour and aggressive, in consequence, it may be, of their cramped position, that no outsider would seek to join them unless constrained by dire necessity. The women conductors had the hardest time of all distributing tickets, collecting fares, answering all manner of questions, calling out the names of the halting places and protecting their persons from bumps and blows. The names of the streets and squares were nearly all new to me and enshrined the memory of various revolutionary leaders, martyrs, or incidents.

The scenes of either side of the broad street were calculated to awaken my curiosity and hold my attention. The compact crowds that literally choked the sidewalks were not the pedestrians with whom I had been familiar. The individual types were wholly different. Nowhere in the foreground, for instance, was the young, dreamy, listless truth seeker of Czarist times to be discerned. All the men and women, aye, and the very children who were forging ahead to-day on either side of the broad thoroughfare were brimful of life, enterprising, instinct with animation, veritable incarnations of self-consciousness in all its forms. Divided into groups, each individual attired in decent unpretentious garments, many of them carrying satchels, portfolios, or well-thumbed volumes, they chatted earnestly of sociology, foreign politics, natural sciences, of France, England, and Germany, aloud, without heeding what was going on beside them. Now and again a member of a group would halt before one of the numerous fruit stands, presided over by a half-famished, scantily attired pauper, hurriedly buy a few apples or pears, and take a bite

in the pauses as he or she kept striding along in step and in conversation with their compeers. Others munched rolls, sandwiches or sausages, and many snacks were enjoyed by them in this unaffected philosophical way on their walk home from work or school. At several street corners there were newspaper stands at which one could purchase Russian and German dailies, reviews, and books. Many were the hawkers of tobacco, cigarettes, and other semi-necessaries, some loudly eulogizing their wares, and even pressing the passer-by to give them handsel, others rubbing their numb hands to keep up the circulation, and now and again a beggar—this time the real Russian type was unmistakable—timorous and dejected, would furtively hold out his hand for a few copecks.

It gave me undiluted pleasure to watch the finer specimens of robust manhood and womanhood visibly thirsting for action as they marched blithely forward with sure tread and overweening exuberance, "pride in their port, defiance in their eye," heedless of those whom they encountered on the route. I, who meekly made way for them by way of atoning for my warm old fur coat, was often violently butted against, pushed aside, shoved and bumped without compunction or evil intent, and by the time I got home my arms and shoulders were black and blue. This I may add happened everywhere in the Republic, not only in Leningrad. Analyzing the traits, the accents and the gait of those crowds I could see that they were not the Russians I had known, many of them indeed I guessed, and afterward discovered, were not Russians at all, but naturalized Esthonians, Lithuanians, Finns, Latvians, Poles, Hebrews, etc.—but one and all they were the successful elements of the population, those who had struggled and emerged, the surviving fittest types of the proletariat triumphant whose only nationality is fidelity

to Marx and citizenship of the world. They are still too conscious of their new-born independence and growing power to be obliging or polite. As many of the streets had changed their names I had occasion to stop and put a question about them to the passers-by in expectation of a civil answer, but many of those to whom I appealed passed on unheedingly or scornfully as though I were begging alms, one or two would listen reluctantly and hastily hurl "I don't know" at me. The police in such cases were my only refuge. They are too few in number. Intelligent and obliging they often helped me out of my difficulties. Later on, when in Moscow, the capital of Sovietdom, I found this air of superiority, not to say churlishness, even more marked than in Leningrad.

I expressed my regret at this proletarian defect to everyone I met and I was delighted a few weeks later to read that the President of the Central Executive Committee had also noticed it, and now publicly appealed to his fellow citizens to cultivate courtesy. "In the days of yore," he remarked, "Russians enjoyed the reputation of being the most affable and hospitable people in Europe. Since then they have adopted the manners of street urchins. It behoves proletarians to display politeness." To that unnamed president I feel that I owe a debt of gratitude and a high tribute of esteem. He has struck the right note. And yet if politeness be a protection against sincerity one cannot reasonably expect it from the Soviets. It would be superfluous.

Two incidents seemingly devoid of importance are perhaps worth recording. I had read in foreign press organs about the distress among the poorer people and their lack of bread. I myself have seen the queues before the shops of bakers and general provision dealers, and I interpreted them as confirmation of those reports. After my

own abundant meal, feeling charitably disposed toward all mankind, I pocketed some white loaves, and on the conclusion of my conversation with a peasant I offered them to him and expected to see his eyes sparkle at the sight. But my expectation was not fulfilled. Far from that. The mooshik looked disconcerted and abashed and firmly refused to accept the bread. As I was not sure of his motive I felt at a disadvantage in arguing the matter. Do what I might, however, I could not get him to go back on his decision. A couple of hours later I decided to present the inviting white loaves to a droshky driver. Having given him his tip I crowned it, as I thought, with the offer of the dainty white loaves, but to my annoyance he too declined them with a lordly gesture, and at last I had to ask him as a favor to relieve my pockets of them, leaving him to do whatever he liked with them afterward. To this supplication he magnanimously agreed. The mooshiks whom we knew in former times would have grabbed the loaves, kissed my hand, and called me "little father." But since then the type has changed, and the peasant of to-day is a full-blown citizen, conscious that he has a country with whose interests he identifies his own, and a government which is largely of his own making; and he eschews everything that might lower the prestige of the former or smacks of disloyalty to the latter. This change it is that transforms the simple incident of the offer of the loaves into a historical event, differentiating the mooshik of the autocracy from the peasant of the Soviets, and drawing a line of demarcation between the past and the present.

A comparison between the pre-war mooshik and the peasant of to-day gives us the true measure of the vastness of the reform already realized. The mooshik of Czarist time, broken to the curb, and accustomed for centuries to be transferred from one landowner to another and to

grovel in the dust before every squirelet, every Jack-in-office, and every foreigner, was in truth a sorry sight. The famous satirist Saltikoff asked:

> Why does our peasant go in bast shoes instead of leather boots? Why does such dense universal ignorance prevail in the country? Why does the peasant seldom or never eat meat, butter, or even animal fat? How does it happen that you seldom find a peasant who knows what a bed is? Why is it that in all the movements of a Russian mooshik we notice something fatalistic, something devoid of the impress of conscience? . . . Why, in a word, do the peasants come into the world like insects and die like summer flies?
>
> The common Russian man not only suffers, but his consciousness of his suffering is extremely blunted—deadened. He looks upon it as a species of original sin with which it is out of the question to grapple, and which he needs must bear as long as his strength holds out. Test this by telling him that the duty of enduring hunger, instead of satisfying it, the duty of vegetating, of sinking and drowning in bogs and marshes, of straining his muscles until they are at the point of snapping asunder, is not necessarily his portion in life, is not the outcome of predestination, and you will notice that his features will at once assume an expression of blank astonishment. Is it not clear that as long as that astonishment continues, no desire to better his lot can possibly prove effectual?[1]

Another of my surprises was the discovery that a man whom I had mourned since the October Revolution as dead was alive and well. I had been assured by neighbors of his that he had been killed like so many others of his ilk during the turmoil, he being a member of a profession that was not and could not be well disposed toward Bolshevism. But after a long quest I found him safe and sound, and as he and I had been close friends for many years we both rejoiced exceedingly at our unexpected encounter. We talked of everything except politics, and I still feel overjoyed to have met him once more on this side of the Styx.

[1] *Letters about the Provinces*, p. 260, Russian edition.

CHAPTER III

HOW THE FOREIGNER FARES IN SOVIETDOM

THE daily life of a foreigner who can afford to visit any of the Soviet cities is much more comfortable than that of the luckless individual who has to fend for himself there among countless competitors. The stranger is infinitely better cared for than the inhabitant, and may indulge for a while in the fleshpots of Egypt without incurring pain or punishment. But even for the stranger existence is by no means as pleasant as it used to be when St. Petersburg and Moscow spent their days in amusements, luxury, and sin. It lacks important factors that make for ease and comfort, one of which is a well-organized hotel service on the lines of good European establishments including personal attention to the guests' requirements. It may be impossible fully to effect this under present conditions, but important improvements are quite feasible even now. Not much can be done if the members of the staff no longer have their hearts in the distasteful and humiliating tasks allotted them, and therefore perform them badly or not at all. Being now full-fledged citizens endowed with important political and social rights, members of the hotel staffs feel themselves to be at least the equals of those pretentious strangers whose silly whims and vagaries they are called upon to execute. It goes against the grain for the political supports of one of the greatest states in the world, self-conscious and high mettled as they have become, to put themselves thus in a position of inferiority toward

flighty worshipers of the golden calf, and they are not above showing that whatever inferiority there may be is on the side of the capitalists. In short, this unavoidable antagonism between dignity and duty which is one of the antimonies of the new dispensation has already led to the discontinuance of certain menial ministrations which are never lacking in any hotel outside the borders of Soviet territory and ought not to be omitted in any hostel which claims to be more than an Oriental caravanserai. For omissions of this nature cause discomfort, and occasionally something worse than mere discomfort, to the guest. It is almost superfluous to mention that boot polishing and clothes brushing are no longer considered to be the proper work of the hotel staff, and foreigners who demand these domestic services have to make a special arrangement with a waiter or a professional outsider and pay for each service as soon as it is rendered.

Before retiring to rest the first night of my stay in a hotel I innocently asked the maid whether I should put my boots outside the door with a view to having them polished before I arose next morning. The reply was accompanied with a long and hearty laugh. "The Lord love you," it ran, "you would never lay your hands on them again if you did—no, nor your eyes either. They would take to their heels and slip away of their own accord, and nobody here could hold or espy them. You'll have to be cautious nowadays. Leather is costly stuff hereabouts, and people run big risks to get hold of some that will stand a little wear. So good citizens don't trust each other very far nor for very long, and if you do like them you won't be a loser." The wisdom of this warning was brought home to me by my subsequent experience. The guest is not trusted for an hour by the hotel authorities, however solvent he may be. He is forced to pay on the spot for every-

thing he consumes, and he is given a receipt, which should not be thrown away. No credit, short or long, is accorded him on any grounds or pretext. Thus, together with his tea in the morning, a signed receipt for the amount due is laid on the table, and the waiter insists on having cash down for it before the inmate can taste his porridge or attack his rolls. If he require more butter or milk or sugar, as is often the case, the same process has to be gone through *da capo,* and each time the bill is settled, a tip, although not expressly demanded, ought by rights to go with it. The waiter generally stands expectant until it is proffered, after which he vanishes like a ghost. I was kept constantly putting my hand in my pocket, and counting up the change given me, and putting receipted bills together, and washing my hands after having fingered the dirty coins or notes. For the apartment one must also pay day by day. After a week of this settling up of accounts I had quite a pile of receipts which I finally flung into the waste-paper basket.

The rooms of the best hotel in Leningrad were airy, well kept and well heated, and the prices were nowise exorbitant for the foreign traveler. The food there is relatively cheap but indifferent; the variety of the dishes, too, is unduly limited, and the cooking needlessly mediocre. I tried several other restaurants in the hope of doing better, but the farther afield I went the worse I fared, the hotel restaurant, despite its defects, being still superior to them all. Besides, many of the restaurants recommended to me were closed for good, while others had restricted their service to coffee and tea. In Moscow things were different. The new capital, however, is hampered by lack of room. It can hardly find space enough to accommodate its increased and increasing population, so that rents run high everywhere. The hotel apartments which are offered at

relatively moderate prices in Moscow are therefore not nearly as large or as well appointed as the same class of rooms in Leningrad, while they are much more expensive. On the other hand, the food in Moscow is far more varied, better cooked, and more attractively presented—in fact, it may be affirmed without exaggeration that in no European capital to-day is the cooking as good as in the best Moscow hotels. A dinner or lunch there—not the table d'hôte meal—if ordered by one who has lived in the city and is capable of selecting the right dishes—the dishes which only Moscow can properly prepare—is the most exquisite meal one can enjoy or imagine. A latter-day Apicius might aptly describe it as a synthesis of healthy gastronomy, nourishment, and good taste. Moscow has ever been famous for its fish, especially for the sterlet which, when cooked in "monastery fashion" and properly served, is a dish worthy of Brillat-Savarin. Then a fish soup known as "ukha of sterlet," formerly indulged in by bishops and archbishops of the Orthodox Russian Church, who abstain from flesh meat, is another treat for the daintiest palates. And the prices, although high when compared with those of Leningrad or other cities of the Union, are sensibly less than those of the first-class restaurants of Paris, Berlin, or London.

Since the suppression of private trade and commerce, hotels and restaurants are in the hands of officials who are directly responsible to the authorities for every abuse or neglect complained of or discovered. It is only fair to add that this responsibility is keenly felt by the managers, who are extremely anxious to have their hotels conducted to the satisfaction of guests and government. I have had some experience of the scrupulous spirit in which they perform their duties. I once missed several articles in a Moscow hotel when packing up with a view to traveling. I had

arranged to have the packing done for me by one of the many domestics about the place. It chanced, however, contrary to expectation, that I did not take the train or quit the capital as I had intended, but went to another hotel instead, and when unpacking there I missed the articles, which, I may add, were of little value. I casually mentioned the matter to the secretary, and the manager was informed against my will. He called on me at once, and, with perturbed mien, asked for a full description of the missing articles, because, he explained, it was his duty to discover and return them to me at all costs. I very reluctantly supplied him with the data, and in quite a short time the lost things—only mislaid, he said—were returned to me without one missing.

The chief jarring note in this touching harmony is the yearning, nay, the silent but visible hankering, after tips which members of the staff in every hotel and restaurant insistently exhibit. Probably nowhere in Europe is this greed for money so naked and unashamed as in the first-class hotels of the Soviet Union. Needless to say, it eludes the vigilance of the manager, and as every gratuity is supposed to be a really voluntary gift it does not come within his jurisdiction. Moreover, as the natives do not patronize expensive hotels, they escape this unpleasant method of silent exaction, and as the tip seekers and they are all equals, a tip from either to the other would be incongruous and almost insulting. Foreigners, therefore, who put up at first-class hostelries are the special prey of these baksheesh hunters.

During my journey from Leningrad to Moscow I found myself in the same sleeping-car compartment with a highly cultured engineer who, despite the wariness exhibited by every citizen of the Union when casually meeting with a stranger, entered freely into conversation with me and

told me interesting things about the industries in the two largest cities and particularly about the great locomotive works. He showed me the fine-looking engine that was drawing us smoothly southward—a brand-new product of domestic industry of which he showed himself quite proud, as he enumerated with gusto its perfections. In the morning we each drank a glass of weak, insipid tea together, and I asked him how much, in his estimation, I ought to pay the conductor over and above what I owed him. "Nothing at all," he replied. "I never give a tip to anyone, nor do I see why I should. Tips have no place in our daily life since the Revolution." Although this is as it should be, I still harbored doubts as to the soundness of his advice, but, summoning up courage, I paid my bill and nothing more, whereupon I received the conductor's thanks. But I never dared to repeat the experiment in a hotel or restaurant where waiters expect to be allowed to "spoil the Egyptians."

The provisions in the large towns are abundant and of excellent quality. The markets, especially in Moscow, are literally laden with vegetables, fruits, fish, caviar, game, cheese, and other delicacies carefully arranged with a view to artistic effect. The result is a delight to the eyes that contemplate them. Luscious fruits that grew and ripened in far-off sunny climes, and of many shapes and delicate hues, stood out in pleasing contrast to the thin layer of glistening snow that covered the ground and the roofs. The gorgeous colors so harmoniously displayed formed an exhilarating picture that made a deep impress in my memory. The Crimea, Azerbeidjan, Transcaucasia, Persia, and Armenia all minister to the wants of Moscow's guests, political, technical, and others. Apples, especially those oblong, rosy-tinged, juicy apples of the Crimea, which are unequaled in the world for flavor, and the so-called

Antonoff apples, were set out in artistic profusion. They are the most delicious and the cheapest fruits in the bazaars. Last December a consignment of those same apples somehow found its way from the Crimea to Barcelona and was bought up by the Catalan public in a twinkling, the price being marvelously low. To the eager questions of the citizens whether any more such cargoes might be expected the reply was an emphatic affirmative. And another large consignment was understood to be on its way to the Spanish port, but it never got so far: before it could enter Spanish waters an order was telegraphed changing its destination to South America. . . .

Grapes had a favored place in this exotic show of dessert fruits—tempting bunches of various tints, forms, sizes, and flavors were all seductively set out to catch the eye of the wayfarer and lure the housewife. One kind was uncommonly like the most delicate muscatel grape of Spain, and an expert assured me—what I had already inferred from experience—that in every respect the two might be bracketed together. Nearly every day I acquired quantities of them at the rate of eighty copecks a kilo, or less than a shilling a pound.

The Moscow bazaars have another claim to the attention of the visitor: they attract all sorts and conditions of native men and women whose racy dialogues, expressive gesticulations, interesting narratives, original points of view, and amusing arguments in bargaining shed a strong light on conditions of existence in that part of Soviet territory and enable one to see how the new order is being adjusted to everyday needs and where it is seemingly taking root.

I am fairly familiar with most of the great fruit, flower, and vegetable markets all the world over, from Pekin to Odessa and from Singapore to Yucatan, including the bazaars of Constantinople, where victory is to the bees,

wasps, and flies. I made a habit of visiting them for the purpose of acquainting myself with a certain class of the natives of the country, and I was amply rewarded for the time I spent there by what I learned indirectly from the buyers and the vendors about their notions of things, their daily strivings, and their outlook upon life and the universe. But not one of those markets impressed me so profoundly as those of Moscow, where, however, much still remains to be done from the sanitary point of view. In order the better to measure the distance between the old order of things and the new, I devoted some hours to the passers-by of the new order, listening to the seller's panegyrics of his wares, to the process of bargaining, and at its close to the words of peace and reconciliation between purchaser and vendor. Some of the dialogues thus overheard, with their clever repartees and striking similes, were sufficiently amusing, impressive, or witty to have induced Lucian to add them to his *Dialogues,* were he risen from the dead, and a visitor to the Oknotnitsky Ryad.

Having made their purchases, most of the housewives lug them home slowly and painfully. Some few can afford to drive, and there are quite a number of droshkies—old, decrepit, and filthy, but not wholly useless—in waiting, and nowhere else in the city are their prices so moderate as here. The government motors, infinitely superior in every way, are also cheap over and above, but they are so few as to be hardly ever available.

The staple food of the people is rye bread, and during the early part of my stay it was good in quality and not especially dear. Since then, however, the insufficiency of the grain reserves having made itself felt throughout the Union, the Central government has issued a decree regulating the prices at which bread shall be sold to the two elements of the community, the workers and the "drones."

Congruously with that edict loaves are now baked in two shapes, one for the proletarians, who pay only half and even less than half of the prices charged to the non-workers. Ordinary rye bread costs the former thirteen copecks a pound and the latter twenty-six; whereas the two finest qualities are sold for twenty-eight and forty-five copecks[1] respectively, and all would-be purchasers must produce their authorization papers, after having stood for hours in line, before they can be served. The "drones" have no cards and no bread from the state reserves. Naturally, this measure which opens up fateful questions has caused widespread bitterness, particularly among those who have to go in search of money wherewith to buy food and then in quest of food to sustain life. Other popular comestibles, such as cabbage, potatoes, dried mushrooms, etc., are relatively cheap, but then money is relatively rare. Vodka, which was banned for a considerable time from the Soviet Republics, has now a large and growing sale, so large that its consumption has been proclaimed a danger. I was informed that the majority of the women in some of the Republics clamored insistently but in vain for legislation against the lure of the vodka shops. Interesting statistics collected by the advocates of prohibition were given to me tending to prove that the entire people are confirmed drunkards, but as they were grossly exaggerated I withhold them here. I deal summarily with this eternal problem in the chapter entitled "The Cultural Campaign."

Some of the most palatable table waters in the world, as well as medicinal waters, are to be had everywhere in the Union, a boon that cannot be too highly appreciated by the traveler. Since the war various Continental coun-

[1]Since the above was written prices have gone up considerably, and black bread now costs as much as fifty-five copecks a pound in Odessa and other places.

tries which had never before sold or even bottled anything but beer are now constraining their foreign guests to consume local mineral waters which are decidedly unpleasant to the taste and have nothing whatever to recommend them. And as foreign mineral waters are not stocked the visitors have no choice. The countries which thus restrict the freedom of their guests deserve to be named, but I leave this civic act to others. It is a relief, therefore, in the Soviet Republics, to know that the waters to be had there are the best of their kind in the world. On the other hand, some articles which are in daily use in all European and American countries cannot be obtained for love or money in the Soviet Republics, not even in such large cities as Leningrad and Moscow. By way of verifying this assertion I went to various chemists and other shops in quest of olive oil, and not only was I unsuccessful, but the salesmen or saleswomen looked daggers at me, as though I were trying to perpetrate a silly joke on them. Clothes, woollen wares, boots, mufflers, mantles, implements required by peasants, shoemakers, and tailors, are by no means easy to be had. They are all scarce or entirely lacking. I was credibly informed that even such articles as shoemakers' awls and tailors' needles were sadly needed.

In the theaters, at concerts, and generally in public places, luxury is eschewed, and everyone is free to dress as he or she can and will, so that all sorts of apparel receive recognition, and however outlandish a costume may seem to the foreigner, it causes no surprise to the natives. Once, however, I had a somewhat different experience. I drove over in a smart motor—not, I need hardly add, my own—to view the temporary Lenin Mausoleum, one wintry afternoon, and I wore an old but serviceable fur coat, the weather being bitterly cold. Now on that day there chanced to be a crowd around the monument, and I had no sooner

stepped down from the motor than I was encircled by the multitude, angrily stared at, nudged and shoved, and my way to the entrance of the Mausoleum was practically barred. Several of the ragged young proletarians eyed me leeringly, and a peddler sidled up, and pointing to his basket filled with Soviet red badges called upon me to buy some. I replied that being a foreigner it would be illegal as well as improper and presumptuous for me to wear any such distinctions, but that, if ever I should be endowed with the right I would certainly bear him and his wares in mind. This answer was not well received, and, my position growing distinctly unpleasant, I drove away as soon as I could shake off the ungracious urchins who clung to my vehicle, and went to the Mausoleum a week later. Another time I noted one or two young Communist girls who appeared at a reception in attire which would have passed muster in a Paris salon. One of the votaries of fashion was amicably rebuked by the wife of a high dignitary, and she acknowledged the reproof with a sweet, unrepenting smile. Women are women even among Sovietists, but necessity compels most of them to forgo their aspirations. Many people lack winter clothing, but in spite of this and other more serious privations they take things courageously. A lady I know who must keep house on hardly anything for her father and brother assured me that she has to stand in more than one queue every morning very early and lose some hours daily waiting in the cold for her turn to come to be served. But she was used to it by now, she added, and anyhow, there was no remedy. Despite her brave words she looked pale, pinched, and bloodless, as though she were already virtually dead and waiting only to get decently buried. And since then, if she be still alive, her troubles have become a hundred times greater than they then were.

Moscow and Leningrad are possessed of a few modern innovations which are not available in many European States. Muscovites and strangers who visit the capital and are desirous of obtaining information about persons and places in as brief a span of time as possible can satisfy their longing without expense or delay. In the large public squares of the city there are little booths communicating directly with the central office of General Information, at which one can ascertain almost anything. Persons about to travel or to meet friends, and wishing to know when the train or the steamer starts or arrives at its destination, are sure to receive trustworthy information. Even if they are curious to learn the hours of departure and arrival of trains in Siberia or the Caucasus, or any remote part of the Union, they have but to demand it. Anyone who wishes will be told in a booth the price of vegetables, meat, fish, etc., in the markets and shops, and where costumes, boots, stationery, etc., are to be had, and who are the merchants in the market or the officials in the administration. A father who wishes to send his boy to an educational establishment, but has not decided when or where, can have his doubts solved in this easy way and all the conditions, etc., of each school laid before him. Others may want to invest money—although capitalists are discouraged—and to know what State loans are in good odor, what they cost, and all about them. How books or goods can be dispatched from Moscow or any other city to any quarter of the globe will be revealed to any visitor of a booth or of the chief bureau. Statistics of all kinds are at the service of those who can use them. The time of day is frequently asked, as is also the probable weather. It was suggested to me that I should have myself wakened up in the morning by telephone for two copecks a turn, as some people do, but I was not in need of this service. One of the questions

that worry many people turns upon the law and whether in such and such a case they have the right to do this or that. All that information is a public service which the citizens enjoy gratis. If they seek to learn the domicile of some dweller in the city they have to pay from twenty to twenty-five copecks for each address. The bureau sends written answers to all questions to any part of the Union.

On the other hand, certain forms of public convenience with which one half of the population comes daily into contact are beyond words foul, offensive, and dangerous. The same places under the three Czars under whom I lived, although far from exemplary, were incomparably better kept. This is one of the surprises that startle one now and again as entirely out of character with the aims, strivings, and incipient successes of the Soviet authorities.

The shops which are in the hands of the government are not open every day, and when open some do business only for a few hours, others "as long as the goods hold out." The salesmen, except in the bookshops, are not particularly keen to serve the public, and their attitude of Olympian calm provokes irritation. I have in mind one such shopman whom I could not induce to sell me an article although it was hanging up beside him and I offered him the price. He told me I must wait, although I had already waited longer than those he was serving, so that at last I departed without the article. This falling off in trade and commerce, and the consequent disappearance of the shops as contributors to the radiance and gayety of the city, make a deep, sad, and lasting impression on foreigners, especially on those who were familiar with the streets of both capitals in pre-war times. Nowadays, in large cultural towns throughout the world, great distributing centers with their enormous windows and attractive exhibitions

lend to city life much of its warmth and glow, and the absence of these fascinating haunts is largely answerable for the dismal feeling that comes over one in the once gay thoroughfares of the two capitals.

This dispiriting impression is enhanced a hundredfold by a visit to Russian interiors. What one there beholds—the outcome of many causes, but especially of lack of space—suggests an unfavorable comparison with the past and enables one to measure the drop in the scale of comfort and sanitation that the inhabitants have undergone. Parenthetically, it is impossible not to dwell upon the strange incongruity that in a country occupying one sixth of the globe the people are almost suffocated for want of space! But so it is. The Muscovites are huddled together like tinned sardines, in rooms, corridors, cellars, garrets, lofts, nooks, and corners on staircases. Cosiness, privacy, all the elements that constitute a home are eliminated. Only ten per cent. of the inhabitants reside in flats, about 86 per cent. vegetate in rooms, while the worst of all are those who have no roof to cover them and are forced to stand in a queue outside a night refuge and wait there in the cold and rain until they are let in or turned away. Two millions and a half passed into those refuges last year, more millions had to wander about at night in search of what they knew they could not find, so they lay down wherever fatigue, weakness, and cold overpowered them. It is reported that one bitterly cold morning, succeeding a still colder night, two hundred frozen bodies were collected and buried.

The room dwellers are of course much better off—relatively. Most of the rooms are occupied by three or more persons, some have as many as five inmates. Eight square meters is all that a large number of individuals can obtain.

I was assured, but I did not verify the terrible statement, that some thousands have to sleep and live in "rooms" or cubicles of *two* square meters. The idea haunts one. In both capitals I beheld the shrinking of the number of square meters per person and some of its effects. I have a friend whose commodious flat I had been familiar with for many years, and when I called on him last autumn he was confined to one room of it, and in his family of three there were consternation and sorrow. The other rooms were in the possession of strangers to him and to each other. I paid him a second visit a month or more later, and while we were talking in that stuffy, reeking chamber some carpenters came in with saws, hammers, planks, and nails, to make two rooms out of the one, and they worked away heedless of our presence. I visited some of the common flats, and the sights were distressing. The glass of the double windows had become semi-opaque with dust and smoke. Sometimes a pane of glass being broken, a paper or rag takes its place. From afar you are assailed by smells of garlic, onions, stale tobacco smoke, slops, and various offensive effluvia. At my first visit, on entering, owing to the dense atmospheric screen, I could hardly discern the human inmates. When I began to distinguish their features I noticed pale, sunken, bloodless cheeks, disconsolate looks, and dreamy eyes. Almost every compartment contained one invalid or more couched on the floor coughing, expectorating. Through the thin partition that sundered one chamber from the next an ear-splitting din betokening a brawl between men and women jarred on my ears, and a shower of foul invectives and threats left no doubt that the parties would soon come to blows. To this squeezing together of women, men, and children picked up at hazard, and also to the unavoidable consequences of this lack of indispensable privacy, has been traced the rapid growth of

crimes against the person. Statistics tell us that since the square meters allowed to each citizen have been cut down by the central authorities these crimes have increased to an extent which is undoubtedly disquieting. Statistics are generally on the side of him who cites them in favor of his thesis, and as I have no thesis I forbear to give the proportion in which crimes against the person multiplied in the course of five years.

Many a native would employ a Russian proverb by way of palliating the condition of things. It runs thus: "When a forest is being hewn down, chips fly about." But as an explanation of the phenomenon under consideration it is unsatisfactory. In April, 1929, a decree was published the object of which was to reduce the overcrowding of rooms and compartments. It ordains that all non-working elements of the population and all ex-house-proprietors shall be evicted from government buildings. In Moscow that will mean the expulsion of some ten thousand families, whose places will be taken by men and women workers. Doubtless this will free a certain limited dwelling space and allow a few batches of roofless proletarians to find a refuge. But what is wanted is a solution of the paradox that Russia, which is, so to say, inundated with space, has no room for its citizens.

There was much private talk while I was in Moscow about projects for rebuilding a part of the capital with a view to alleviating the "Black Hole horrors" caused by overcrowding. Germans and Americans were approached on the subject. There were several projects, one of which was for the construction of many small houses adapted to the wants of latter-day proletarians. Since then I have learned on good authority that a contract has actually been signed with a Chicago company for the construction of ten dwelling houses divided into small flats of one, two,

and three rooms arranged in American fashion and provided with all necessaries and some comforts. This contract, which is for 25,000,000 dollars, proves that the Soviets are alive and solicitous for the well-being of their comrades.

CHAPTER IV

BOOKSHOPS AND BOOKS

In the streets of Leningrad I had hardly strolled for half an hour before I was startled by the vast number of bookshops on the way. What, I asked myself, can all those Noah's Arks of printed matter be wanted for in this agricultural and well-nigh illiterate community? But I soon remembered that the more primitive and illiterate a people, the greater their need of books of a certain kind, and I was aware that some of the root-reaching changes for good or for evil in the ideas, striving, and institutions of nations are effected by books. In Leningrad, and still more in Moscow, those bookshops impart the dominant tone to entire streets: there are bookshops for the sale of literary productions, original and translated; bookshops where only technical works are kept in stock—chemical, medical, aëronautical, engineering; bookshops that deal exclusively in school primers and manuals; others that vend Oriental writings—works in Arabic, Tadjak, Georgian, Hebrew, Turcoman, Armenian, Mongolian, Karelian, etc.—in a word, one might readily imagine that Leningrad and Moscow exist mainly for the purpose of radiating universal knowledge over the planet. One of the stores on the October Prospekt—the Leningrad branch of the State publications—with its attractive show of volumes in the windows, fascinated me, who am a passionate book lover, and I entered. Although the rooms are fairly spacious one could hardly move there for the multitude of eager buyers, work-

ing men, peasants, artisans, women and girls, etc., impatient to be served. So dense was it that I could barely get to the counter, so I decided to depart and return later. On my way out I caught sight of a notice in large letters on the doors and windows announcing that "this establishment remains open until 9 P. M." *Nine* P. M.! This in a city in which the banks close at two o'clock in the afternoon and the principal stores a couple of hours later! My curiosity was awakened. At 8:30 P. M. I went back and was relieved to note that the crowd had thinned considerably. The salesmen were now most attentive, their acquaintanceship with recent literature—Russian and foreign—was extensive and seemingly exact, and I passed on from section to section, receiving pleasant surprises as I went. One of the largest sections was devoted exclusively to works on Count L. Tolstoy who, despite his feudal nobility and his religious propaganda, had become the object of a sort of belated hero worship in the community of the Soviets. I stayed on buying and chatting until it was closing time.

When I went back to my hotel that evening and summed up my impressions I realized that the Russia so dear to my heart—the Russia to which I had come to do homage—was but a memory. It had vanished forever, together, with its traditions, customs, ideals, beliefs, national virtues, vices, and its magic charm. Democracy, prompted by the shade of Marx, had riven the earth, Enceladus-like, upsetting the very center of gravity, and through the abysmal chasms that yawned on every side nearly a whole generation had sunk into eternal night.

In the number of book stores Leningrad is greatly outstripped by Moscow, which looks as though it might be the book purveyor of the universe. To me the sight was new and suggestive. I never anticipated anything like this. I had left no place for it in the fanciful scheme of Russian

life that I had drawn up for myself. The notion that a large percentage of mooshiks were smitten with a mania for enlightenment and flocked to these shops with curiosity and ardor as in former times they flocked to fairs and festivals seemed hardly admissible. Peasants and books were as alien to each other as fire and water except in conventicles of sectarians where the New Testament or the entire Bible and some polemical leaflets composed their library. But the fact was undeniable. The stores were crowded, the salesmen were busy to the full extent of their capacity, and millions of volumes were circulating in the various Republics. The sight of these horny-handed, scantily attired working men and peasants awaiting their turn to give orders at the counter, or to pay at the desk, opened my eyes to the completeness of the change that had come over the population. Nothing that I beheld during my visit brought the evolution home so fully to my mind.

Looking further into the matter I learned that quite a host of teachers, strictly professional as well as well-meaning Philistines, had come forward to instil their knowledge into young and old minds alike in as clear, simple, and palatable a form as they could evoke. And the measure of success they attained was another subject of wonder. Writings popularizing the natural sciences were so numerous that I could infer without more ado that they must be considered in some way to be related to the teachings of Marxism. Subsequent research confirmed my inference, and I further noticed that the spread of the principles of biology and kindred subjects is, so to say, a hobby of the Soviets, who seem to deem them an antidote to the "poison of religion." I took the trouble to peruse some of those introductions to science, and I was very favorably impressed with the pains taken to make the treatment of each theme easy, interesting, and suggestive

to the untrained mind. The results were profoundly satisfactory. One or two of the exposés that fell into my hands were almost pedagogical masterpieces, while most of them were quite cleverly put together. I remember one in particular which I thought excellent. It was entitled: *How Man Appeared on the Earth,* by L. V. Kanel. In the conception and interpretation of the historical sciences, as in their outlook on life, the Soviets have of course their own standards, which are saturated with Marxism and hedged round with dogmatism on the one hand and faith on the other hand.

Behind all scientific and politico-social teachings of the Soviets and at the root of all their undertakings we find as mainspring and motive a proselytizing zeal for the spread of Marxism of an intensity never before matched outside religious movements. The Bolshevists are at bottom a teaching fraternity and therefore propagandists. The notion cherished in some countries that Bolshevism can be freed from propaganda is inconceivable to those who are acquainted with Communism of the Marxist persuasion at its source. Doubtless there are many Marxists "of the day after" who glibly profess the doctrines of Bolshevism just as they would conform to those of any other party that chanced to be in power. But there are also many others who are convinced, earnest, zealous, and self-sacrificing apostles. Incidentally, one may ask how these latter innovators contrive to persevere in their ungrateful work from day to day and year to year, leading abstemious lives, and whence they draw the spiritual force that sustains them when their ardor cools down and their spirits are low. But they do. The most striking example, only one of many, was Lenin himself, who had a hold on the popular imagination which was little short of magical. To say that he was a genius will not convey a very definite picture to the

minds of people accustomed to use and misuse this hackneyed term many times a day. It is, however, a fact that his combination of gifts and defects enabled him to exercise a sort of wizardry over multitudes, to touch their very souls, firing them with enthusiasm for the new teachings which they were incapable of comprehending and permeating them with heroic endurance and self-abnegation. He had hardly any relaxation from work and little encouragement. His grit and stamina were entirely his own. His followers compare him to Moses, some of their enemies liken him to the Antichrist, others to the Pied Piper of Hamelin, but for evil or for good he was one of the biggest leaders of modern times. A genius one may aptly call him. And yet oddly enough Lenin acknowledged himself to be a humble follower of Marx, who was undoubtedly his inferior in all essential respects. The Russian disciple raised monuments to his German master in gardens, squares, and public places, thus conferring on him a limited kind of immortality.

But to go back to the countless volumes that appeared in the land at the *fiat lux* of Lenin. The deadliest foe of all material progress is illiteracy, and illiteracy was one of the standing traits of the bulk of the Russian people. It was also the despair of some of the Bolshevist chiefs, and it still causes them heart-burnings. The average Russian of prewar times, bred in crass ignorance, fell an easy prey to every fad and every ridiculous sect that cared to capture him. Hence the monstrous religious fraternities of men and women who bound themselves never to tarry more than three days in any one place during their lives, other communities whose members danced round a fire till they were half demented and then indulged in obscene orgies. In a word, the obstacle to advancement and conversion presented by the illiteracy of the peasants was formidable.

Hence the drastic and untiring efforts of the Soviets to dissipate it, the millions of roubles spent and the leagues founded to spread the knowledge of the written word. The movement initiated by Lenin assumed forms that were almost corybantic. Middle-aged and even old people were galvanized into brisk activity and are still being cajoled into visiting reading huts at night in the country several times a week, there racking their unlimber brains in learning the different letters of the alphabet and then joining these into words. The procedure is at once interesting and pathetic. The government is eager to diffuse a knowledge of the elements of reading, writing, and arithmetic among all the favored classes of the population and especially to cast the children's unsullied minds into thoroughly atheistic molds and train them as propagandists. All that can be usefully said of this fateful experiment is that if the Bolshevist aim to convert the population to Marxism be feasible at all, it can be attained only by some such trenchant method as this. He who wills the end must also employ the means. From the raw material of impressionable children one can turn out Mohammedans, Buddhists, Catholics, Jews, or Atheists at will. And the choice of the Soviets is aggressive Atheism which in Sovietland is the correlate of Communism. The two doctrines blend together harmoniously, are in fact one. I have listened to innocent little children whose prattle would in Christian lands be classed as sheer blasphemy.

The Soviets have always laid due stress upon research work and scientific investigation, but immediately after their victory over the bourgeoisie they had to begin at the beginning and fight illiteracy first. This they set themselves to do as soon as there was a lull in their ruthless struggles with various enemies. And they were guided by two considerations—first, that the population consists

mainly of peasants and working men, and that books destined for these potential readers must be carefully adjusted to their intelligence, limitations, and requirements; and second, that the main object of all instruction is to imbue the recipient with the doctrines of Karl Marx. For every branch of knowledge, therefore, a wholly new set of school books had to be written, printed, and introduced into the schools on the one hand, and a new generation of scholars had to be qualified to make use of them on the other hand. And these tasks were hastily distributed among the experienced pedagogues in the various Republics. To children's books especial attention was paid, and no mercy was shown to the fairy tales and romances that delighted European tots for centuries. *Little Riding Hood, Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves, Jack and the Beanstalk, Sindbad the Sailor,* and *Bluebeard,* etc., are banned, while marvelous stories of science told by first-rate men of letters, sometimes illustrated by recognized artists, have usurped their place. And with the concrete products of these innovations the public libraries of all the Soviet Republics are now amply provided. I picked up a few of these books with some curiosity but no pleasant anticipations, and I must confess that, dismissing from my mind the gospel according to Karl Marx which strongly flavors them all, I was forcibly struck by the care, taste, and ingenuity expended on their composition.

Young Communists in educational establishments are treated with great consideration and made to feel their responsibility as the coming props and supports of the Union. From the age of eight onward they have their own periodicals, which are edited with the same care and directed to the same ends as the books. It is worth noting that in every school and every establishment in which there are youthful pioneers there are also copies of those periodi-

cals published for their behoof. Another branch of the press, essentially characteristic of the Republics of the Soviets, is devoted to the exposition and spread of anti-religious ideas.

The leading organ of this propaganda, entitled *The Godless,* has been pushed with rare ingenuity and resourcefulness. It is credibly stated that within the span of four and a half years the authorities turned out and found eager readers for upward of twenty million copies of that publication. There is also a fortnightly review of the same name of which in two years 1,300,000 numbers were printed, published, and distributed. These two, however, by no means exhaust the list of anti-religious periodicals. There are others edited not only in Russian, but also in the languages of the various republics for which they are destined, the controversial style of which is carefuly adapted to the intelligence and tastes of the peasants and working men to whom they address themselves. Religion is looked upon as the mortal enemy of Bolshevism and the organization of the churches as a chronic menace to the new politico-social creed, and everything possible is done to root it out, and failing that, to check its spread by paralyzing its ministers.

In spite of all they have suffered, the Christian leaders contrive to issue quite a large number of volumes for the benefit of their believing brethren. In the early part of the present year they printed 20,000 copies of the entire Bible, also a table calendar in 30,000 copies, besides which they publish a review entitled the *Christian* in 15,000 copies. These symptoms of activity seem to have shocked the feelings of the Leningrad printing fraternity, for the members of that body are now carrying on a campaign against the Christians, propose to boycott them in future, and to refuse to print any Christian writings.

It was Lenin himself who first tackled the problem of

illiteracy and gave the initial impulse to the movements that sprang up in the various republics for the diffusion of enlightenment. His successors are pursuing the same course to-day. In a lecture delivered before a congress of working women and peasant women Commissary Lunacharsky emphasized the practical advantages conferred by book reading and systematic knowledge and the losses inflicted by their absence. Referring to the words of the eminent botanist Timirazeff, he said:

> He has some remarkable sentences which I am very fond of repeating. Here they are: "I have often mused on why the Danish peasant harvests in from the same field as that of the mooshik seven times more wheat than he. I thought that possibly the soil in Denmark is superior. Not at all, it is just the same average land there as here which gives our husbandmen very poor harvests. Is it the climate then that is better? No, the climate is approximately the same as in most parts of Russia. There is no great difference.
>
> "Is our peasant brainless, whereas the Dane is provided with abundant brains? Everything goes to prove that the capacities of the Russian tiller do not yield in any respect to those of the Dane. . . ." Timirazeff holds that the cause of the difference is to be sought in the schools. Elementary schools and agricultural schools in Denmark are greatly superior to ours. And the Danish peasant graduates in them. The prosperity of Russia then can be effected only by improving the methods of tilling the soil by means of joint exertions. And those who give this matter serious thought must come to the conclusion that the work will have to begin at the school end.

The libraries and bookshops immediately after the Revolution were so many arsenals in which were piled up the deadliest weapons for use against the revolutionists. Moreover, nearly all the educational works available were saturated with what they characterized as the "narcotic of religious belief." They had need, therefore, of qualified scientists who could change all that quickly, and endow the country with the kind of school book which should

fulfill the new requirements. They also needed paper, which was scarce and dear just then, printing presses, and trained compositors. And if they devoted much time to the quest of these aids the opportunity would lapse and the future of the young generation "be in jeopardy."

Alarmed by this outlook the leaders of Bolshevism unhesitatingly nationalized or municipalized—in common parlance, seized—all the paper they could lay their hands on, all the printing presses and every other requisite available. In the years 1918–1919 they laid the foundations of a literature and pedagogy of their own which were to be Archimedean levers for rousing the masses from their secular torpor and uplifting them to the bracing heights of the new democracy. And the outcome was a flood of printed matter of all kinds—Russian classics, educational primers, popular science series, reprints of the writings of the Bolshevist leaders, and translations of the handbooks and tracts of their foreign teachers, such as Marx, Engels, etc. In twenty months Moscow and Petrograd contrived, despite adverse conditions, to publish between them a hundred and fifty works of which some had editions of two hundred thousand. But what editions! Some were tainted with the old heterodox orthography, others, despite the collaboration of first-class artists, appeared with filthy smudges instead of superb illustrations, and all were technical failures. This is how one of the Bolshevist leaders described to me the causes of these mishaps:

"We were up against forces that most people would classify as irresistible. We had not nearly enough paper. We lacked trained compositors. Some of our workmen were secret enemies. Our printing presses were frozen, actually frozen—winter had set in—many were also eaten with rust and unworkable. The members of our staff were numb or frostbitten for lack of fuel, some were also fam-

ishing with hunger. We were at bay against a huge combination of adverse circumstances. That's when the character of the rank and file of our people was put to the severest imaginable test. And they stood it splendidly. Those botched volumes are eloquent testimonies to the grit of our pioneers in the work of bookmaking, and as such they deserve to be preserved."

In the space of seven years the State published 250,000,000 books and pamphlets of which 70 per cent. were destined for the peasantry, the workmen, and the elementary schools in which these sections of the population were being taught.

Another measure adopted on the spur of the moment was to entrust to certain foreign firms, mainly German, the printing of a number of Russian works. At the same time the government monopolized the printing and publishing throughout the Union and founded the all-important institution known as the Gossisdat (State Publishing Board) which gradually acquired and still wields decisive power or influence over the written word in all its forms and in every Republic of the Union. This board is composed of a director assisted by a permanent council, the members of which are appointed by the Commissioners of the People. The task of the board is overwhelming, and it is so interesting that I was at some pains to get an insight into the procedure in Moscow and Leningrad, and I succeeded in seeing how the director and the board coped with the multifarious problems set them.

The present director, Khalatoff, is even better worth seeing than his cleverly dovetailed arrangements. For his is a remarkable figure which once seen can never be forgotten. The first impression is given by the copious crop of soft black hair that decks his finely shaped head, the general effect of which is heightened by the abundant

beard and mustaches, and then from under the bushy brow and silken lashes beam forth two mild eyes like stars on a summer's night in a tropical sky. His face, decidedly Oriental and nowise plebeian, is generally lighted up with an ironical pensive smile, as though he had just realized the vanity of all things, excepting Bolshevism. To my thinking, Khalatoff has the head and features of Hillel, the great Jewish teacher and contemporary of Jesus, and they proclaim that his proper place is in a circle of learned men, judges or doctors of the Law. He sits in his armchair, barely visible in the crepuscular light of his office, the incarnation of calmness and self-possession. Now and again he takes up the telephone to answer a call, and in a voice scarcely above a whisper, with the very gentle hint of imperativeness in it, and with an amazing economy of words, replies to puzzling queries, clears up misunderstandings, ends discussions, and delivers instructions to various departments and persons. In the work of Commissary Khalatoff there is no hitch. His board prints, publishes, and distributes nearly 60 per cent. of all publications in the Union, the remainder being left to other boards and sub-branches, the most important of which is the editorial department of which Voroffsky, who was assassinated some time ago in Lausanne, was the chief. The department is subdivided into several sections, each of which has its own specialty, one turning out educational works, another editing popular books or volumes on natural science, and so on.

At the beginning of each year a plan of campaign is carefully drafted for discussion, whereby, besides new productions, a selection is made among the manuscripts which were held back in the foregoing year for lack of funds, and parallel with that estimates are made of the paper, ink, colors, illustrations needed, the proposed price of the books, and a comparison is struck between the

probable cost and the funds available. This done, the approved programs are handed over to the publishing department, which sees that they are carried out and allots to each of the eight sub-departments its own special part of the labor. This seemingly complex arrangement works very satisfactorily. Within twelve months of its existence the State Publishing Board, I was assured, brought out volumes dealing with a variety of subjects and running into 10,000,000 copies. These publications were then passed on to the various distributing centers on their way to the political groups and individuals, who received them free of cost or for a merely nominal sum.

This gratuity was natural, for at that conjuncture the rouble kept falling until nobody knew whether it was worth anything or nothing at all. The masses were impecunious, and their cultural needs proportionately extensive and urgent. After a while the attention of the Publishing Board was almost entirely devoted to the peasantry, in consequence of which more millions of books, booklets, and pamphlets sprouted up—in the year 1925, 60,000,000—for their behoof. Not all the inhabitants of the Union speak Russian, and some express themselves in idioms which when the Bolshevists emerged from obscurity had not even an alphabet and therefore no written word. For these benighted groups suitable alphabets were invented by philologists and then employed by improvised compositors in books. To me this was an interesting process. I had witnessed and even taken a modest part in a similar cultural enterprise in Mexico when, under the later President Obregon's ægis and the leadership of Professor Vasconcelos, frantic efforts were put forth to enlighten the bulk of the Indian population. Peripatetic educational establishments were formed, thousands of voluntary teachers gave their services gratis and traveled

from village to hamlet, opening schools and haranguing peasants who contemptuously rejected all teaching. The ingenuity of the clearest heads in the Republic was taxed to its utmost to bring the undertaking to a satisfactory issue, the gravest impediment being the refusal of the peasantry to be taught by laymen. But compared with the titanic labor which the Soviets have accomplished since the year of the "Nep"[1] or with the measure of success attained, the Mexican venture was the merest child's play. In a brief span of time the entire territory of the Union was deluged with "literature" composed for one and all. The "backward peoples" who possessed no written records were presented each one with a brand-new alphabet for its native idiom, with sheets, leaflets, reviews, and books on practical matters. Each of the numerous groups—political, social, artistic, professional—was duly catered for: working men, soldiers, railway employees, avicultors, teachers, coöperatives, "pioneers," communists, men, women, and children. It is worth noting that long before the Turkish government began to consider the question of alphabets, the practical Soviets had decided that their people of Turkish race should abandon Arabic writing and get accustomed to the Latin alphabet, which was officially introduced then and there into the elementary schools.

Being myself a philologist by taste and profession, my curiosity was naturally aroused by what was being attempted for the peoples of non-Russian speech, and I satisfied myself that so much was accomplished that it may well seem incredible whether we measure it by the efforts put forth or the difficulties overcome. The Central Cultural Board of the Peoples of the Union which deals

[1]The new economic policy introduced by Lenin and grudgingly tolerated or wholly reversed by his immediate successors.

with the cultural requirements of non-Russian citizens prints and publishes works for their behoof in twenty-seven different idioms—works that arouse curiosity and satisfy it. I went to the bookshops in Moscow and Leningrad to take a look at this improvised pabulum for the untutored mind, and as far as I could decide whether it was what it professed to be—"a cultural influence stimulating the people to desire and relish reform, enlightenment, progress." I was informed that no less than 214 periodicals were printed in forty-eight languages, each people being free to employ its own without restriction, but after I had handled some twenty I desisted. Needless to add that like every other enterprise of the Soviets this feat was meant at the same time to be a powerful dissolvent of all feeling of kinship with the foregoing generation and of the ties that bound the population to the old order of things. Hazarding a guess—the merest guess—on the strength of appearances I should say that their success, which is indubitable, is largely due to their singlemindedness, apostolic fervor, and selflessness. Neither this nor any other enterprise of the Soviets should be scanned and classed on the supposition that it is a political, social, scientific, or cultural experiment. Nothing would be more misleading than this. Soviet workers are not mere politicians. Far from that. Their devotion to politics abroad, to pedagogy, to sanitation, to the upbringing of children, to the cultural uplifting of the peasants at home, etc., must not be taken to mean that they are animated by an irresistible desire to dispense those benefits to an ever-widening circle of fellow citizens. All that it signifies is that those boons to the population or to a part of it are deemed to be means to Bolshevist ends and are employed as such by trained specialists on those subjects and by self-denying apostles of the new gospel. Contemplated in this semi-mystical light, much

that appeared incongruous or self-contradictory falls into its proper place, and motives, means, and ends lose their strangeness. If the diffusion of Marxism could be better served by a pause in this or that reform, or even by a reversal of this or that scheme of improvement, these innovators in their capacity as high priests of Marxism would not hesitate to strike out the direct route toward the attainment of their unique aim.

One of the phenomena that impressed me most was the sudden uplifting of the Ukraine into independence, vigor, and relative prosperity. I knew that province of Czarist Russia very well when I was professor at the university of its capital—Kharkoff—and later on when I was editor of the Russian daily paper the *Odessa News,* but in those days it was not yet Ukraine, only Little Russia, and its language as immortalized by the poets Kotlareffsky, Shevtchenko and others was in every way discouraged by the Czarist government, and was even forbidden in the popular schools and places of worship. Every time I went abroad I took care to buy and bring back books in that language which had been printed in Austria, but were prohibited in Russia, and to present them to certain colleagues of mine in the Faculty of Philology. This expedient, which was finally bruited abroad by agents of the government, brought me on one occasion into conflict with the censor.

Under the régime of the Soviets the Ukraine has risen from the dead, become a republic in its own right with a population of some 29,000,000, 15,000 elementary schools, 34,000,000 up-to-date books, most of them classified in libraries for the benefit of the people who, I am told, read them with abnormal avidity. The orthography of the Ukrainian idiom which was a matter of endless controversy before the October Revolution was at once standardized on a more or less scientific basis by a board of expert philolo-

gists and writers. The Ukraine is now instinct with life and activity, and in some respects has not only reached but outstripped the northern republic of which Moscow is the capital. Certain of its laws and educational ordinances differ considerably from those of the Russian Republic and the difference tells in its favor. The punishments meted out to misdemeanants and criminals, for example, are better graduated and somewhat milder than in the northern republic.

Altogether the Ukraine has become animated with a new soul and is a different country from what it was when I resided there. It is a human hive in which all the bees are busy. To take but one instance. Architecture, which had for ages been neglected in this battleground of Russians, Poles, Hungarians, and Tartars owing to its exposed position and the frequent invasions which razed every human habitation to the ground, bids fair in the near future to become a specialty of the land. There are now several remarkable examples to be seen in the capital, Kharkoff; the Palace of Industry has challenged and received ungrudging praise from competent foreign judges. The splendid municipal dwelling house is another instance of what could and would be done were the funds forthcoming. But here as elsewhere the economic and financial difficulty casts its shadow over plans and projects and obliges the visitor to be chary of forecasts.

Somewhat at variance with all the benefits so liberally showered on the 1,546 peoples of the Union is the way in which the rich, flexible, and expressive Russian language is being maltreated. This disfigurement is calculated to fill with resentment those who know Russian historically and are therefore capable of appreciating its manifold excellences. To begin with, much might be objected to the new orthography and certain of the alterations that go with

it, were this the place for objections. Worse still are the many barbarous terms formed out of the first syllables of several words which are strung together even when the product is quite unpronounceable. Unintelligible they always are to ordinary people, who are irritated by their frequency, which counteracts their ability to read. In Moscow I heard it said that any educated person could guess the meaning of that etymological hotchpotch. That same day, however, I brought home a list of the monstrosities collected during my walk through the city, of which I could not figure out the sense, and these I laid before the two special pleaders who had uttered that rash assertion. And to my satisfaction they were forced to admit that to them, too, several of those cryptic vocables were quite meaningless.

I once approached on the subject Lunacharsky, the Commissary who presides with éclat over scientific, literary, "theological," and artistic meetings, and has a say in all innovations proposed in each of those branches. I ventured to ask him how he could reconcile the monstrosities complained of with his literary and philological conscience. His reply was in effect as follows: "It is a mistake to ascribe all these changes to a whim of the Bolshevists. They have had nothing to do with this innovation. When the Soviets undertook to rule the country they found proposals of the Academy of Sciences which the Kerensky government had accepted but lacked the stamina to carry through. The Soviet authorities looked over the suggestions thus weighted with academic support, and came to the conclusion that they were calculated to simplify the orthography, and therefore the learning, of the language, and without more ado they adopted them, and the results have justified their action. I cannot say that I endorse them all, but what would you have me do—protest against the

deliberate decisions of a body like the Academy of Sciences? It would have been simply preposterous." Commissary Lunacharsky disclosed interesting details of other schemes that cropped up at the same time, and some that aimed at simplifying the language were amazingly radical. One scheme was the introduction of the Gregorian Calendar, another was the substitution of the metrical system of weights and measures for that of old Russia. And everybody, he added, is glad that they struck root in the Union. Still more radical was a project that came up for debate about the alphabet. It was pointed out by the proposers that the Russian language might with advantage be simplified by writing it henceforward with Latin instead of its present semi-Greek characters and enabling everybody to pronounce it. The suggestion is interesting in itself, and it is also attractive from the Bolshevist angle of vision, which is the Europeanization of Russia and the drawing closer of the bonds of every nature that unite all peoples. But having weighed the advantages and the defects, it was judged to be a risky step, at any rate for the moment. According to Commissary Lunacharsky one of the consequences of that proposal, for which the Soviets could not accept responsibility, was the barrier it would raise between the new generations of readers and the old generations of writers. The former would be deprived of the great literary treasure that is theirs to enjoy, and the latter would have worked for the people in vain. With the Germans the case is different: they have long had two alphabets, the Gothic and the Latin, and all schoolchildren are conversant with both, so that the passage from Gothic to Latin was easy enough and occasioned no loss to the reading public. It is and will be our endeavor, Lunacharsky added, gradually to bring about a similar substitution of the Latin alphabet for the Russian. This will need the exercise of judg-

ment and tact and favorable circumstances, but it is a goal worth heading for. In the fullness of time it will doubtless be reached. The tendency, he holds, is everywhere perceptible: even those peoples of Turkish race who still employ the Arabic alphabet—when they have any alphabet at all—take readily to the Latin as a substitute.

These innovations and their origins are highly interesting as signs of the times, but the Russian language does not lend itself easily to the proposed change. It possesses sounds for which the Latin alphabet has no equivalents. Take, as an instance, the monosyllabic word for a certain soup: in Russian it is written with two letters, but when the Germans transliterate it they have to render it with seven consonants, followed by a vowel, thus: *schtschi.* Since the war a barbarous custom already alluded to has played havoc with the Russian tongue, and without provoking a word of discouragement from the all-powerful government. It consists in dissecting words into syllables and stringing together the first syllable of two or three or more vocables in order to render the meanings of them all. Commissary Lunacharsky assured me that the practice took its origin in a spontaneous desire of Russians to save time and trouble—which is a praiseworthy object nowadays, when time is so highly valued. How much easier it is, he argued, to pronounce the lifeless algebraical terms than the genuine soulful words may be judged from the following:

Komsomol stands for Kommunistitsheskyi soyuz molodyoshi (the Union of Youthful Communists): *tsik* is easier to pronounce than tsentralnyi ispolnyitelnyi komitet (the Central Executive Committee); *narkompros* takes up much less time to pronounce than narodnyi kommisariat prosveshtshenia (the People's Commissariat for Enlightenment); *gus* stands for Gossudarstvennyi ootshonnyi soviet (the State Council of Scholars). . . . None the less

to me it seemed little less than a sacrilege to mutilate a fine literary language thus.

According to Commissary Lunacharsky the process began before the Soviets had established their sway in the land, and even before the dawn of the Provisional government. Under the last Czar, during the war, the general striving to economize time and trouble had assumed this unesthetic form, and the practice has gone on spreading and widening until to-day. And it will probably go on developing, despite objections and sarcasms. It is a curious fact that no dictionary of this new dialect has as yet been published, nor does the need of one seem to be felt by any of those who are capable of writing it. Bolshevism has radically transformed many things sacred and profane that had withstood the most powerful dissolvents known to history, and the symbol of this leveling down of all values is the disconcerting abracadabra to which one cannot but take exception.

CHAPTER V

THE PEASANTS

After the October Revolution the Bolshevist chiefs were faced by two urgent problems: the struggle against monarchist or "capitalist invaders" and the conversion to Marxsim of the peasantry whose aims and strivings were known to run in a direction diametrically opposed to those of the Soviets. The radical change, produced by the tremendous upheaval that shook the very soul of the population and roused it to keen self-consciousness and self-sufficiency, was not by any means a complete solution of the problem. So the teachers and the taught were confronted with a new issue—how to reconcile the individualism of the mooshik on the one hand, and the collectivism preached by the government on the other hand. They are mutually incompatible and any effort to harmonize them will always be fraught with danger.

As on this matter the peasants are not precisely docile, I was curious to hear from their own lips the two opposing views. Accordingly I questioned two mooshiks and a priest. The views of the ex-monarchists of the old régime needed no elucidation. These remnants of the party that brought about the war and the fatal upheavals that followed it are now serving the present government resignedly and loyally withal. The number of those who were almost miraculously converted to Bolshevism was legion—some of them friends of my own.

One of the peasants, a veritable tatterdemalion attired in

patched holes rather than apparel, is an untiring worker, a born orator—a "spendthrift of his tongue"—and a really clever observer of men and things to boot. Of the world statesman he lacks nothing but the clothes and the manners. Before the war he was a hard-working young artisan living with his patriarchal people in the country, loyally devoted to the Czar, like his parents and his neighbors, and a practising member of the Orthodox Church. Swept away later by the war wave, he fought on various fronts, was wounded many times, taken prisoner abroad, and escaped. During those eventful years his horizon widened. He is now become a luminary of the new dispensation and is appreciated as a quick-witted observer, capable of sizing up a situation at a glance, and dealing with it resourcefully. He has been transformed into an enthusiastic, convinced, and eloquent upholder of the government. I also questioned other less clever peasants, and I was struck with the thoroughness of the change that has taken place in their religious and political views, their character remaining the same. If genuine, this transformation may be likened in its way to that of Saul at Damascus. Formerly devout members of the Orthodox Church, those peasants who were supposed to be tearful worshipers of God and the Czar are now rampant atheists, full of angry contempt for priests, their dogmas, and their precepts.

"How are the peasants in your part of the country disposed toward the Soviets?" I put the query to the clever mooshik. "As friends, of course," he replied. "And the working men feel just as we do. We are still backward, all of us, as is natural, but we are not stagnant as we used to be. The peasants, as you can see, aren't yet great consumers of steam or electricity. They still work with their hands, as their fathers did. They make the most of oxen and harrows, and it stands to reason that they are behind

other peoples for the moment. The Soviets are trying to do away with our wasteful Old World method of tilling the soil, and a few years ago they urged all who could to save up and invest in agricultural machinery. But it appears that the intention of the government was misunderstood, or it changed soon afterward, or else the circumstances became different—anyhow, some peasants who had laid aside a few thousand roubles or more did as they were told and bought agricultural implements of the newest kind, each one for his own exclusive use, but the government put its foot down, and explained that this was sheer capitalism which clashed with Communism, and must, therefore, be given up. The only safe course, we were told, is to get several families to put their heads and their money bags together and to buy tractors and other machinery to be used by them all in turn. And that's the policy that is now in vogue: 'Collectivism' is its name, but there has not yet been time for it to bear full fruit."

"Tell me what you can about the koolaks," I asked.

"The koolaks," he rejoined, "are villagers just like ourselves who have managed to put by money for the rainy day and want to spend it on their own families. The villagers who invested in tractors, etc., were koolaks. Any peasants who employ labor are koolaks. The government won't hear of their way of getting on in the world. They call it selfish and insist on every land tiller pooling his savings and practising strict collectivism. That implies a sacrifice which some refuse to make, and this difference of aim has given rise to disputes. But it's not true, so far as I know, that the koolaks are being persecuted or punished. They are being checked, that's all, and the method is to impose a personal tax on each one proportionate to his means, and to get the poorer peasants to join hands and go in for collectivism. In some country districts the koo-

laks are strong and stubborn and have given much trouble, but not in our district. You know, of course, that the rural population falls into three categories: the poor, the middle section, and the koolaks."

"I don't suppose you ever feel sorry that the Czars are gone," I remarked. "I should say not," he promptly replied. "Under the Czars we led a dog's life. The exceptions were very rare, lads who managed to climb up the ladder toward the heights, but this was sheer luck and cleverness. Nobody could count on it, no matter who or what he was. As for the bulk of the people, they might just as well have been in hell, for their misery was endless and their outlook hopeless. The villagers and their families were huddled together in dark stinking hovels—you have seen them. Want of light, air, and nourishment weakened their stamina, and often disabled them for the life struggle, and then they were left alone to face hunger and disease, God and the Czar being always far away on such occasions. There were no hospitals to go to except in far-off towns where one was as often rejected as taken in. Years ago, in a country district when the cholera was said to be coming and something had to be done in a hurry to stave it off, do you know what was decided? To have eighty plain coffins made and a number of broad deep graves dug. No more practical idea came into the heads of the top men. We are all right glad that those times are never coming back. And we know who it was that rescued us.

"You remember," he went on, "the famines that thinned out the population of wide stretches of country every now and again and caused thousands to die horrible deaths? The Czar's government could not, of course, hinder the drought or the rains that brought them about, but it could and should have laid in sufficient provisions of corn to meet such periodical calls upon its help. In this it failed always

and everywhere. Against the plagues that wrecked the hopes of the husbandmen, whether they came as clouds of locusts from the south devouring every green thing, or as drought or heavy rains destroying the crops and beggaring whole districts, nothing was ever done or undertaken until it was too late. Nowhere was there any remedy or relief. We hadn't even the cold comfort of grumbling aloud. Utter a word of dissatisfaction and the Zemsky Natshalnik or the landowner or the police inspector had you silenced and imprisoned in a jiffy.

"Do you recollect the land hunger that often drove the peasants to risk their all in order to allay it, and tempted them to take over a few acres from the landlord at a ruinous rent, and then to work like slaves in the hope of rearing a family on the proceeds? Slavery. To be born a mooshik in those days was to come into the world with a curse hanging over you. You may not be able to realize how the peasants suffered and despaired and yet drudged on without help or hope, but you can give a guess at it by calling to mind the diabolical fierceness of their vengeance when in 1905-1907 they rose up here and there in utter madness against the slave drivers, tortured them slowly, burned or buried them alive, and would have extirpated the entire capitalist brood if they had not been cut down in turn by the Czarist troops. But in the end they had their innings all the same."

"Do you think, then, that the landlords really deserved what they got?" I asked. "You mean, I suppose, that a few of them were friendly enough in their way? Perhaps they were, but I am not talking only of the landlords. I am speaking of the capitalists as a crew or a caste. It was they who brought down upon us the evils that beset us. And now that they are gone, who can delude himself into believing that we should ever want them back? They would

not have vanished quite so soon if they had not given themselves the luxury of a couple of foreign wars. That's what shattered and brought down the foundations of the Empire. Then it was that Lenin's genius seized the opportunity and made peasants and workmen join hands and show what a united proletariat could do. But it matters little what we think on the subject. The main point is that the Empire and its works are dead and cannot be called to life by forces within or without the Union."

"Let me put an indiscreet question to you. This sketch which you have given so pat, is it the outcome of your own musings and memories, or have you had these refreshed?"

"Both. We've all got to learn the lesson in words, besides musing on the facts. Our children drink in the story as soon as they arrive at the age of reason, and sometimes they chatter it before. But we of the older generation need little teaching or preaching. We have been through the hell of Czarism and the horrors of war, and we are now minded to keep clear of both. That's why we are with the Soviets against monarchists and capitalists and are thwarting their plots at home and abroad. For if capitalists are no longer here they are still at their old tricks in neighboring lands where they are laying their heads together to undo Lenin's work. There lies the danger. We are in sight of another war, worse than that of 1914. And the lasting peace which the League of Nations promises to secure by paper treaties we are seeking to attain by checkmating capitalism, which is the chief cause of all foreign campaigns. Even now, as you are aware, the capitalists are making ready for another world war. And as they are all joining hands, whereas we stand alone, you can guess against whom those preparations are designed. Our object is to abolish all wars by removing their origin. Lenin's first act

was to put an end to the World War in which this country had 8,500,000 killed and 22,000,000 wounded. He did not mind the cost. 'Stop the war!' was the cry he uttered in the name of peasants and workmen. And he stopped it. Was that a boon or an evil? You, our ex-allies, branded it as a crime against humanity, but we welcomed it as a precious gift."

"Tell me," I again broke in, "are you really satisfied with the settlement of the land question, if it be a settlement? I ask this because I have in mind utterances made by some of your fellow villagers in the years 1919 and 1921; they execrated State proprietorship of land and announced their resolve to work against it above ground and under ground until it was set aside by means of documents, signed and sealed, making over to them the plenary possession of their farms and woodlands with the right to use and dispose of them as their personal property. Well, this aim which would commit the Soviets to capitalism has not been fulfilled, cannot in fact be fulfilled. By what mode of reasoning, then, do your comrades reconcile themselves to a settlement of the land problem which they would not hear of a few years back?"

"The facts," he replied, "are not quite as you state them. The first step taken after the October Revolution was to oust landowners, usurers, parasites, and capitalists of all shades. That has been done. The next was to hand over the land to the peasants without any formalities, leases, or expense. That too has been accomplished. Their right to the soil lay, and lies, in the fact that they alone can till it. If private property had been established this vast reform could never have been effected, for in that case those mooshiks who had saved up a few thousand roubles might have bought the land and revived all the evils of capitalism. Our anchor of safety is precisely the abolition of private prop-

erty. But it needs time to prove this. In the meanwhile we have all the land that we can cultivate. As for the length of time it will be ours, we have no cause for anxiety, for we keep and till it as long as we live, and our children take it over after we are dead and gone. What more could leases and sealed documents have given us?

"It has been reckoned out and stamped upon our minds by lecturers, newspapers, and books that under the Czarist régime, the average holding of the landlord amounted to about 2,000 dessatines,[1] whereas that of the peasant family was only 7½ dessatines. You don't suppose that we pine for a return to that state of things. The October Revolution bestowed upon us some 60,000,000 dessatines of land which had belonged to the capitalist classes, and were valued at seven and a half milliards (roubles). And all this we got without paying a copeck. Do you know that we now cultivate 96 per cent. of all the land?

"In lots of other ways, too, the condition of the working classes and peasants has been greatly bettered by the October Revolution. If the government has imposed taxes on the mooshik, it has also done much to lighten his burden all round. When the civil war was still raging and money was scarce, millions of roubles were distributed among struggling would-be tillers of the soil who were endeavoring to stock their land or buy seed, implements of husbandry, etc. Home industries which are often very profitable were encouraged. Families exerting themselves desperately to keep their heads above water received credits which came like manna from above. A short time ago the very poorest of the peasants—men of the third category —were relieved of the burden of getting their land into trim, the sum required being advanced by the government as a long-term loan. Certain sections of the peasantry were

[1] A dessatine is about 2½ acres.

freed from all taxation for the space of five years, others for three, and so on. These things should be borne in mind when assessing the services rendered by the Central government.

"Instead of being exploited as serfs we are now the rulers of the Union. Each one has his say in the election of public officials. And everything is being done with a view to the further improvement of the workers here and in the towns. Everything. Mistakes are sometimes made, but the general trend is toward the welfare of the masses, and it is but fair that we should give the régime credit for that. There's no denying the pains taken to raise the people from the depths in which for ages they were plunged and to make them participators in the culture of to-day. Countless books, pamphlets, newspapers are yearly published for our behoof. And we read them. Schools for our children and technical institutions for our youth have sprung up in many places, and they are filled to their capacity. Lectures are delivered throughout the land, even in the remotest country places, and they are listened to with lively interest. Knowledge is spreading rapidly, illiteracy is banned and is fast disappearing—even a large section of the older generation has been taught to read and a smaller percentage to read and write. Women are treated as the equals of men, and they have more than justified this tardy recognition. In every branch of the administration you will find women who hold positions of responsibility as forewomen, managers, secretaries, and even directors, and exert a far-reaching and beneficent influence on the course of affairs political, social, and economical. With all these acquisitions, have the working classes in the country grounds for serious discontent?"

"Do you mean to say that they approve the action of the government in discouraging individual prosperity and

enforcing coöperation? Does their Communism go quite as far as that?"

"In the great majority of cases it does. Some villagers resent the policy on the ground that it kills 'incentive,' the others are fervent supporters of it because it uplifts whole groups or communities. I belong to the latter class myself—in fact our village and district are all of that way of thinking. The aim of the government is to plant Communism firmly in the Republic, and to stop the growth of capitalism, covert as well as open. This appeals to our village. The object is to unify the Republic and to make the interests of the individual identical with those of the whole community, and enable the Union to win for us world markets and prosperity."

"And do you also welcome the imposts you have to pay on the one hand and the prices offered by the State for your corn on the other hand?"

"The government has done much to improve the breed of cattle and agricultural produce, has popularized the results of scientific research and experiment, and has spent much money ungrudgingly for the purpose of applying them. That is all to the good, but until we can sell our corn advantageously in foreign countries we cannot regain the lost ground. And in order to compete with our rivals we must be able to undersell them for a time."

"Tell me, do you read much?"

"Yes. I am always reading when not working in the fields or making speeches. We have to read. Lenin used to say that reading and Communism go together, are inseparable. By reading and attending lectures, I was converted to atheism and Communism. My entire family, children, and all, are now of the same way of thinking as myself."

"Do you mean to say that your little daughters are atheists?"

"That they are sure enough, and have been ever since they reached the age of seven. Ask them why and they will treat you to a whole litany of reasons. They have already been noted in school for their quickness and distinguished for their general cleverness. They are members of the Pioneers, and are proud of the honor."

"Who are the Pioneers?"

"The Pioneers are an association of boys and girls in groups of forty or fifty. Nearly half of them are girls. Altogether they number a couple of millions, perhaps even more."

I pondered on this item of information, and afterward learned that children are admitted to this fraternity at the age of eleven if they joined a Communist party some years before.

"And do you never feel a pang of regret or a hankering after the church of your fathers?"

"No. Some people do. I know of one man who has crawled back to his priest and his icons and has dropped out of the revolutionary ranks forever. But I have never felt a qualm."

"Are you a reader of the periodical called *The Godless?*"

"I used to get it regularly, but not now. I still see it in the Reading Hut, and I sometimes take it for the sake of some article that has been recommended to me. But more often I pore over the pages of a review called *Enemy of Religion*. It appeals to me more than the others. Besides, I am an active member of the association of *The Godless*."

"What is a Reading Hut?"

"It is a cabin arranged for the meeting of the villagers who are there instructed in politics and other matters. It contains newspapers, reviews, books, a news sheet on the

wall, and is a center for teachers, lecturers, and delegates from cultural societies. Every village has a Reading Hut. There are some twenty-five thousand of them in the Republic. They are not anything like the splendid clubs, libraries, and laboratories of the big cities, but then how could they be? Besides, we are all made free of the city clubs and libraries whenever we can visit them. This we do from time to time for pleasure or on business. If a dispute arises among the villagers about the land or its boundaries or other local interest, we hurry off to the Peasants' House in Moscow or the nearest city, and there we can spend a day or two or three, get food and lodging at a nominal cost, and also obtain legal advice and assistance gratis. Those are useful institutions, I can assure you."

I went away musing on this profession of faith, and wondering whether the man who made it is an enthusiast or—something quite different.

At first I had some difficulty in getting a mooshik of the Opposition to talk freely. They were all suspicious of my intentions and apprehensive of consequences. Would I publish what they said? What would then happen to them? and so on. Even those who finally opened their lips did not always open their minds correspondingly.

"I'm told that you disapprove of the government's policy," I began when the right man seemed to have turned up. "Now would you tell me briefly why?"

"Who gave you that information about me? A spy, or a government correspondent, was it?" These exasperating preliminaries consumed much time and caused some emotion before the crafty husbandman took courage and queried: "What do you want me to tell you? Don't you know how things are as well as I do? What's the use of talk? Our ears are deafened with talk every day about the wisdom and the kindheartedness of this party or that. Talk is breath,

facts are solid. Look at the facts, and you needn't ask me anything more."

"That's all very well," I remarked, "but what do you take to be the facts that count?"

"The plight of the peasants is one of them," he replied. "What was the aim of the Revolution? To better the lot of the mooshik, we were told. And what is his lot now after eleven years of ups and downs? You can answer that yourself. What he has is the obligation to till so-and-so many desatines of the soil because somebody must till it, and there's nobody else but the mooshik. And he must sometimes work for drunkards and malingerers who call themselves 'collectivists.' If he can outwit the authorities and save a few roubles, he's called a koolak.

"Koolak, indeed! Do you know what koolaks are in our eyes? They are mooshiks who do really work. Many of the others—especially the 'poor'—are lazy drones that shirk labor, carouse, divert themselves, and then chime in and claim the earnings of the koolaks. They don't care a rap either for the crops or for Communism: they just swill vodka and while away days and weeks far from work, because the law provides for them by compelling the koolak to support them. To make things worse, we never know who the koolaks are, because there are no marks by which to distinguish them. And then an accident may transform any villager into a koolak overnight. If a village drudge has a couple of cows that calve, or gets a couple of horses, he is a koolak. If his crops thrive and his harvest is plentiful, he is a koolak and must be specially taxed."

He went on in this strain for a long while, dwelling on the koolak problem and illustrating it with one or two amusing stories.

My next chat was with a priest whom I met in the capi-

tal. He emphasized in his own peculiar way what the anti-Bolshevist mooshik had said:

"For one thousand years the mooshik was moored firmly to the rock which is the Church, yet he had sufficient liberty, physical and intellectual, but now he is adrift on the ocean without chart or compass or pilot, tossed hither and thither, in constant danger of spiritual death. When I left the Seminary years ago and went to the village of X, the life of the peasant was peaceful, monotonous, gray, but livable. For one thing, he was not entangled in devilish politics. He had absolutely nothing to do with them. He attended to his own affairs and was not interfered with. Then came the Revolution and covered him with a net so that he cannot move forward or backward, nor yet lie still without coming into contact with its meshes. To-day, if he gets married, whether he is wedded in church or by the State, he is taking an active part in politics. The same thing happens when one of his relatives dies, when his children are born, when he sows corn or reaps it. If he tries to buy implements, clothing, and other necessaries, he is up against the law."

This outburst was in strict keeping with the man's position, rôle, and profession and did not cause me surprise. It is but fair to say, however, that the priests and monks who are still officiating in church and monastery enjoy a certain degree of liberty—wear their habits as in the days of old even in the streets. I have myself walked with them in both capitals. They hold services in some churches, but, none the less, their lines have fallen in unpleasant places.

Another remark is called for here on the subject of the koolaks. If the summing up given above be correct, it is obvious that the koolaks are a real hindrance to the realization of the official plan and that the government and a section of the peasantry stand for two mutually incompat-

ible aims. That, of course, is a matter for themselves. What interests the outsider is to learn the views of the men that count. And some of these are on record. The commissaries, to their credit, are outspoken enough. Whatever of evil or of good Bolshevism may bring forth, it has one institution which has stood it in very good stead hitherto—unsparing self-criticism for constructive purposes. Everywhere one finds merciless censors of the procedure of the government, from the humble little village workshop with its newsleaf on the wall up to the leading articles of journals and the sensational speeches of commissaries. In Sovietdom self-examination is become an ingrained habit. Everything is tested, nothing taken for granted. Abuses, instead of being hushed up, as in Western lands, are dragged into the light of day, gibbeted, exaggerated, decried, and punished and redressed. There are hardly any limits to this self-condemnation so long as the aim is serious and constructive. Hence most of the weapons employed against the Soviets by their enemies are composed of these candid, biting strictures. Upholding this tradition, Commissary Rykoff delivered a remarkable speech in Leningrad shortly after the talks I had with those peasants. And this is what he said about the koolaks:

"It is our custom to stamp as koolaks all those who chance to possess a radio receiver. Now if you can class a man as a koolak for that, you might just as well call him a landowner should he happen to come into possession of a sewing machine or a gramophone. If a peasant tills the land well and without exploiting other peasants he at once falls under the ban of individual taxation. Now, who under such conditions would be at pains to cultivate the soil properly? I hold that there are no peasants so utterly idiotic as to do this, knowing, as they must know, that for such exertions they will have to pay an individual impost, their

children will be ousted from school, and they themselves will forfeit their right to vote. The fact is that the individual impost at bottom is tantamount to a campaign against scientific tilling of the land."

Commissaries and press have tried hard to put an end to the persecution of families that can call their own a few sticks of furniture plucked, at great peril it may be, from the burning of a capitalist's manor. They have held it up to ridicule, but in Russia ridicule seldom kills. One of the Soviet journals—always laudably outspoken—illustrates this in an amusing way while sketching the religious scrupulosity with which those party inspectors go to work whose function it is to weed out the impostors who have obtained posts in the civil service by fraud, or those who are secret koolaks. In the province of Nishny Novgorod a few inspectors set out to prepare the way for the great Purging Commission which would soon start on its work and separate the sheep from the goats. For the sake of clearness and system they divided families into three groups: the super-middle, middle, and under-middle. Into the first group luckless Communists were thrust who owned a sofa, a large mirror, a bedstead with knobs, and a carpet; into the middle group were admitted Communists whose furniture comprised eight Viennese chairs, a table, a wardrobe, and a bedstead without knobs. In the under-middle group were inscribed Communists owning none of the luxuries enumerated in the first two sections. The vigilants register the following interesting sketch of one of the members of the nucleus:

He occupies one extremely small room, of about ten square metres. It is furnished with a writing-table, a soft sofa and a soft armchair, a splendid mirror and a bedstead. The room might be that of a bachelor. It is adorned with pictures, but among them are no portraits of the Bolshevist leaders. The inmate Communist divorced his wife some

time ago and is now living with her sister. . . . Altogether he is a sterling member of the party.

It is not to be wondered at that the stringency of these investigations for sifting the corn from the chaff produced a panic among the members of the party. One of those who visibly quaked and trembled was asked by a correspondent of the *Izvestia* why he felt thus uneasy:

"Why?" he answered. "Didn't you happen to see my bedstead? Are you aware that it has got knobs? I swear to you it has genuine knobs. I never noticed them before, but the other day I read what the newspaper said about it, and there sure enough I beheld the knobs on my bedstead. Now they'll say, 'This lad has degenerated. He has feathered his nest, and has a swollen head. Knobs have sprouted out of his bedstead.' For this kind of a purge, I thank you kindly. If you want a thorough purge, turn my guts inside out, and then you will see the stuff I'm made of, but as for knobs on my bedstead, d—— rubbish!"

Upon the relations between the peasants and the Communists Russia's future depends. The latter form a politico-economic, quasi-religious sect with claims to infallibility. The leaders, when not frauds, as a few of them have been, are enthusiasts characterized by ascetic self-denial, ecclesiastical discipline, and theological intolerance. Some few are also clever organizers. One was a veritable genius—some say of evil—but he died too soon. The rank and file are held together and ruled by a relatively small body which has no desire to grow larger by sacrificing quality to number. Only persons with a vocation, real or presumptive, and after a period of probation, are admitted to the inner circle from which the unworthy are periodically expelled in batches with ignominy. Hence the elect are but as dust in the balance when compared with the one hundred and fifty millions over whose destiny they preside. Of these

citizens a large percentage are non-Marxists, but many of them are being instructed and trained in Orthodox Communism. This is no easy task, for they are obstinate, secretive, and individualistic, and therefore thirsting for property—in fact, they joined the Bolshevist ranks precisely for the sake of the landed property which they expected to get as their reward, whereas the Bolshevists are determined to convert them to Communism which implies the renunciation of personal possessions. That is the present situation in a nutshell.

When Lenin's experiment of practical Communism had landed the country in a no-thoroughfare, it was the passive resistance of the peasants with its awkward consequences that forced him to halt, reflect, and turn back. Unhappily their way of reacting is costly, sometimes even tragical, involving national catastrophes. Thus, when Lenin, inspired by Marxist theories, seized the peasants' grain and nationalized a part of it, they did not rebel, neither did they protest. They merely scratched their heads and grew no more grain than they needed for themselves. The outcome was a famine which carried off more than a million victims. To these tactics Lenin was sensible. He confessed his mistake in words and showed his repentance in acts. One of these was the introduction of the new economic policy known as N E P which he described to his scandalized brethren as "stepping two paces backwards in order to jump two steps farther forward." That was the first victory of the mooshik over Bolshevism, and of the Communists over their own doctrinairism.

One of its practical consequences was the resurrection of private enterprise—for a time. In the year 1925 a decree was promulgated allowing private ownership up to the value of a considerable sum. It was hailed with joy by many. Some months later, however, it was hastily dropped,

and some of those pushing citizens who had availed themselves of its provisions were had up and punished as profiteers and capitalists. After Lenin's death, the new policy was reversed, private ownership and enterprise were systematically discouraged, and collectivism was enjoined as the anchor of salvation.

The peasants deliver no speeches. They merely act, leaving others to interpret their action. Thus the authorities preach, exhort, menace, and chastise, but the mooshik goes his way silently, grimly as before, mayhap unconverted and unrepenting, bearing with him the clue to the future of Sovietdom. . . .

Meanwhile the disenthralment and cultural uplift of the peasantry by the leaders of Bolshevism is one of the most marvelous feats on record. Whether one approves or abhors the doctrines and practices of the men who undertook the task, one can hardly deny either its magnitude or the deterrent difficulties by which they were beset. At the outset their energies and financial resources were almost wholly absorbed by a sanguinary conflict which more than once swallowed their funds and threatened their very existence. But they held their ground with unflinching tenacity until the victory was theirs. And those foreigners who in pre-war days lived long enough in the country to study the habits and the wretched social status of the peasantry will find it hard to recognize them as they are to-day. Under the Czars it was at one time my duty to acquaint myself thoroughly with the peasant problem in all its details, and I acquitted myself of the task to the best of my ability. The conclusion at which I arrived I set down as follows:

The Russian peasanty is

a good-natured, lying, thieving, patient, shiftless, ignorant mass whom one is at times tempted to connect in the same isocultural line with the Weddas of India, or the Bangala of the Upper Congo, and who

differ from West European nations much as Sir Thomas Browne's vegetating "creatures of mere existence" differ from "things of life." For most of them, indeed, life, dwarfed to its narrowest conceivable limits, is void of meaning.

Education was suppressed by force. An official report to which I had access narrated cases like the following:

In the entire Porkhofski district thirty pounds a year is spent in schools, six cantons contributing small sums to this total, and the remaining twenty-three subscribing nothing at all. In several villages of that district (I am speaking of places within two or three hours of the capital) there *is not a man, woman, or child who can read or write,* and every time an official document is received from the Peasant Board (or elsewhere) a special messenger has to be dispatched to a neighboring town to seek for someone to decipher it.[1]

And yet in that same district there are *seven hundred taverns and public houses with a yearly turnover of two million roubles.*

The misery of the rural population in those days was unimaginable. Large numbers of peasants fell a prey to soul-hucksters or dessyatniks who in springtime drove vast bands of agricultural laborers to forests destined to be turned into pasture lands, or to river banks to tow vessels, playing the part of horses, and to various factories, having previously resold them to large employers of labor for double or treble the prices they themselves had paid. Other dealers in these human beings scoured the villages and hamlets, in search of *children, whom they bought up wholesale.* Many needy parents sold their children for several years to these men for a trifle. Having purchased a score or two of children in this way, the dealers forwarded them in *tumbrils to St. Petersburg, just as cattle dealers have calves conveyed to town.* In St. Petersburg the children were resold for double and treble the money to manufacturers and shopkeepers.[2]

[1]Official Report of G. P. Sazonoff.

[2]This extract and the next are from my book *Russian Characteristics* (E. P. Dutton & Co.).

The moral effect of these conditions upon the younger generation was truly terrible. Notions of law and justice were torn from their hearts.

Side by side with utter stupefaction and despondency, one observes the symptoms of unconscious hate, which assumes at times most monstrous forms. "Types have started into being," wrote the representative of the Imperial Economical Society, "which it is absolutely impossible to match: eternally drunk, with disfigured features, with wandering glance, covered with rags, they look like half-tamed beasts. There lurks an unwonted cruelty and savagery in their entire aspect. They are feared by everyone, by the authorities of the village and district most of all." Sons persecute their fathers, drunken fathers dissipate the property and abandon their families to fate. "This is not a proletariat," exclaims the above-mentioned official, "it is a return to savagery. *No trace of anything human has remained.*"

To keep the soul spark of these semi-savages from being utterly extinguished, to make them active members of the human community, was the work to which the Bolshevists set their hands. And if they have not yet accomplished it, even to their own satisfaction, what they have achieved borders on the miraculous. To-day the peasant is wide-awake and superlatively self-conscious; he feels able to grapple with the most arduous task and to bring it to a successful issue; he is in a hurry, like Icarus, to use his wings, and thinks himself ill-used if he is denied the opportunity.

But he certainly does not want for absorbing interests. He is exercised in his manifold duties as citizen with a degree of regularity, frequency, and care that can be matched only in ancient Lacedæmon. He is catechized like the converts to the early Christian Church until he can utter prolix explanations of his conversion and defend his convictions against all critics. He belongs to many associations, musical, theatrical, sporting, is a member of a club, perhaps a member of the staff of one of the countless peri-

odicals that appear in the Union, he may be the representative of his village—of several villages—and an aspirant for admission to the select circle of Communists, and he has land to till over and above. His life is quite full of varied interest. When at last he emerges from party ordeals he "can cavil on the ninth part of a hair" like the first mooshik whose opinions I recorded above, and a certain percentage of those who live near the big cities are "as full of spirit as the month of May." Nobody who has not witnessed with his own eyes the lives led by the peasants of to-day can form an adequate notion of what is being done for them in the Union.

The doctrine of work, as understood by Carlyle, is being imposed by the government with rigor, but its officials are half trained, self-centred, or weak willed, and the response elicited is exactly what might be expected from toilers who object that they are not getting the proceeds of their labor. And the outcome of all those exertions is unsatisfactory. Over and above the percentage of parasites who are resolved to prey upon others, there are the men who plow and sow and reap and then complain that, instead of enjoying the fruit of their labor, they have to pool it for the benefit of the community in the name of collectivism. The Central Authorities are moving heaven and earth to convince, cajole, or constrain these individuals to join the collectivists and cultivate the land in common. Various premiums are offered to converts in the shape of privileges denied to the others. For example, in Moscow the other day the government, which deserves high praise for what it has done for the various peoples and nationalities of the Union, endowed a children's garden exclusively for the gypsies and had it opened a few months ago, but proclaimed that only children whose parents are collectivists might apply for admission.

The conflict between peasantry and Central government is being watched with intense interest by the friends and the enemies of Bolshevism, for the fate of Sovietdom depends upon the issue. To an outsider it may appear easy to settle, but not to the Soviets, who refuse to swerve from their principles even for a brief moment, nor to the rural population, which is minded to live in its own way and bring up families. One of the most unfortunate outgrowths of this conflict has been the peasants' refusal to sow corn enough to enable the government to export abroad. This limitation of the agricultural output caused a famine to which a million persons fell victims. But the stand taken by each party has been persisted in despite the disaster. The authorities can no longer doubt that some farmers will go to any lengths in order to safeguard what they deem to be their vital interests, and the farmers understand that the authorities are bent on upholding their sacred principle at all costs. As the attempt to compel or persuade the mooshik to get into line with the government has seemingly failed, the only remaining way out of the deadlock is now being tried: the government has decided to render itself independent of the agriculturist for trading purposes, by means of an experiment which seems chimerical but is of a piece with many other wild essays on which the authorities boldly embarked and finally reached their destination. The Bolsheviks have at their disposition an enormous dynamic force for which no allowance has been made in the calculations of their critics, seeing that it eludes observation. It is a curious fact that, holding strictly to the doctrine of materialism, they are themselves a striking instance of the dynamic energies the existence of which they deny. In any case their State farming venture, which will absorb enormous sums, encounter formidable difficulties and give rise to new problems, will

be followed with keen interest by believers and unbelievers in their star.

European Russia, when I wrote my report many years ago, comprised nearly 1,237,000,000 acres, of which 1,019,000,000 were registered. Nearly one fifth of that surface was found to be unproductive and two fifths were at the time under forests. The remainder was partly meadow and pasture ground, and partly arable land, in the ratio of two to three. Two fifths of the registered acres were the property of the Crown, one third (317,000,000 acres) was held by the Peasants' Communes, and one fourth part was owned by some 500,000 private proprietors. The system which obtained among the rural peasant proprietors was to a very large extent that of communal holdings. The peasant in those days was prevented from improving his method of agriculture owing mainly to usages which he was powerless to break through. One of these was the three-field system, which was firmly established and religiously observed. The distance of the peasants' abodes, often in large villages as much as ten or twelve miles from the holdings of the bulk of the inhabitants, was another deterrent. Then again, security of tenure, an indispensable incentive to improvement, was made impossible by the periodical redistribution of the holdings.

To-day, therefore, despite many adverse circumstances, the annual output is potentially much greater than in that epoch; in fact, if the country has not yet become again the granary of Europe, the reason is not in the quality of either soil or labor, but in the peasants' refusal to sow for the market and in the government's endeavor to eliminate the thriftier and more laborious elements of the population on the ground that they are a hindrance to the establishment of Marxism.

Some twenty years ago the Russian peasant was treated

as belonging to a lower grade of humanity, and his personal rights were reduced to serfage level. For example, in order to get admission to one of the intermediate or higher schools, to engage in trade as a merchant, or to enter the government service, he had to renounce all rights to grants of land, and was further obliged to resign his membership of the community. In consequence of this law the more enterprising elements were artificially weeded out from the villages. If he wanted to migrate to a town or city where labor was urgently needed, he could not do so without the assent of the head of his household or of the peasants' community; which meant waiting, bribing, and perhaps entangling himself with the law and its administrators. As regards labor, his rights were frequently limited by the "bratschina" (*corvée*) and he was liable to criminal proceedings at the hands of his master if he absented himself from work. The administration of justice in rural courts was as primitive as was the general state of peasant civilization; penalties for offenses varied according to the position of the person offended and, as I have shown, corporal punishment still served to emphasize the ex-serf's lower grade of humanity.

The Soviet government has achieved great things, and it aims at still greater. It has thrilled a mass of lethargic humanity into consciousness of almost unlimited power and audacious enterprise, and is now supplying it with the means of whisking away obstacles. Koolakism is not the least of these obstacles. It is being put down slowly but systematically. All koolaks are deprived of their vote and their civil rights in the village community. Many of them contrive, by various cunning devices, to regain their position. To meet this abuse, official Weeding Commissions or Purges are sent from place to place to ascertain who are the foxes that have stolen into the fold and to

expel them. The Bolsheviks resemble the early Christians in quite a number of respects and among others in the ease with which they are hoodwinked by heartless deceivers who, like Lucian's Peregrinus Proteus, exploit the advantages of an influential position and the simplicity of the heads of the confraternity.

The other day the authorities discovered to their horror that in the Polytechnical Institute of Kieff seventy-five dispossessed had contrived to get themselves inscribed as orthodox students. Some of them were sons of former landed proprietors, of noblemen, and even of popes.[1] The city of Kostroma has technical institutes for real proletarians in which no less than eighty-five popes and sons of popes—an abomination to the right minded—had palmed themselves off as Marxists. In the Baku University an investigation exposed the unwelcome fact that noblemen, ci-devant squires, and sons of Mohammedan Mullahs—all supposed to be incarnate enemies of Marx and his followers —were studying together under false colors with unsuspecting Marxists. Indeed, the flotsam and jetsam legally expelled often find their way into the Labor Association without arousing misgivings; owing to the fact that if an individual have forfeited his right as a voter, he may still exist somehow provided he have the book of the association. Hence all the expelled who can, whether qualified or not—and it is said that they number millions—get the coveted book and become full-fledged proletarians until the perambulating Purges come around and scatter them to the winds.

On the other hand, the authorities thus prompt to free the citadels from anti-Marxists and exclude the intruders wholesale may, in their zeal, expel many upright loyal

[1] A pope is a secular priest who generally has one wife but who cannot marry after his ordination.

proletarians, who are then thrust down into the Caves of Despair, whence they make piteous appeal to the supreme authorities. And these it must be admitted are always ready to listen patiently to complaints and appeals and do justice to those who have undergone ill treatment. In March, 1929, no less than 10,000 dispossessed were thus reinstated in their rights as voters by the heads of the Executive Committee.

Sometimes the koolaks have recourse to crime, assassinating those representatives of the Kremlin whose function it is to keep a lookout in the villages and hamlets for koolaks and report them for the purpose of having them specially taxed and dispossessed. While I was there thirteen murders of "correspondents," as these individuals are termed, were reported from various places in one day. In the morning the corpse of a correspondent is discovered in a field, a protocol is drawn up by the village authorities, and the facts are reported with the remark that no trace of the assassin has come to light. White Terror is the term used for these practices. The phenomenon is well known in the history of revolutions, and is by no means irremediable.

Summing up the facts one must admit that, however this conflict may finally be settled, the peasantry owe a deep debt of gratitude to their liberators, who virtually raised them from the dead. Like the dry bones into which the prophet Ezekiel breathed life and force and upon which he laid sinews, the Russian mooshik has been restored to the ranks of humanity. The Bolsheviks freed him, roused him from his lethargy, introduced him to the world of action, set him ennobling tasks, and qualified him to perform them.

CHAPTER VI

SOVIET PROBLEMS: THE GORDIAN KNOT

When the Provisional government fell and President Kerensky fled, hell was let loose in Russia. The whole social and political system, long since decrepit and baneful, entered upon its death throes accompanied by the tramp of warring hosts, the boom of heavy guns, the gutting of palaces, and the glow of burning mansions. Death in hideous forms, prompted by vengeance or suspicion, stalked the land by day and by night, smiting good and bad indiscriminately. Life was not worth a day's purchase. All the old cultural finger posts, the hallowed institutions, the well-trodden social tracks, the inherited modes of thought and action suddenly sank in the abyss. The terrorized people fled hither and thither without direction or goal. The whole nation, distracted by exhausting wars at home and abroad, seemed about to collapse, and the new problems that faced the self-appointed leaders were countless. Moreover, as with the Sphinx's question of old, failure to work out the answer would spell ruin. Over a hundred and fifty millions of the Czar's former subjects were split up into a hundred and fifty-six tribes and tongues, each one eager to be completely free from intermeddling by others. Means had to be taken to further and harmonize their interests and generally to conciliate all. The effects of economic decay were everywhere visible and tangible. As nobody could foresee what the morrow would bring, few felt disposed to labor. Money and food grew scarce. Famine was superadded to the other

visitations. Bands of hunger-stricken men and women set out in quest of food. Defenseless children without a roof to their heads found themselves adrift and wandered hither and thither in search of meat, drink, and clothing, but only to encounter an appalling doom.

Sundered thus from her ancient moorings, Russia made ready to encounter her wild destinies. As yet there was no experienced and trusted leader in view who could be relied upon to bring order into the seething chaos. Chance or providence was shuffling the cards.

Outsiders cannot realize the vastness of the upheaval effected by the October Revolution. One must have lived and worked in the land under the Czarist régime, and one must have resided there again after the upheaval, in order to compare usefully the two states. What happened in October, 1917, was not merely the substitution of one form of government for another, or of one set of institutions for another. It was a sweeping organic change in every branch of life, public and private, in the reciprocal relations of persons and groups, in law, in ethics, in education, social aims, land tenure, and in the people's outlook upon life and death. And those startling innovations, not confined to local or national use, were destined for the entire universe, that being a standing characteristic of all Russian reforms; had been so even with the crude projects daily put forward by the young generation when I was a graduate at a Russian university in the reign of Alexander II.

In the beginning, suasion, interest, and constraint quickly converted the bulk of the population into active apostles or passive disciples of the new rulers. Among the peasantry the lure of the promised land was irresistible. The old order was dispelled as by magic. Even the Church,

once believed to be proof against all attacks, and built on the rock of ages, had no effective safeguards in her arsenal against such unprecedented temptations. Pious worshipers in the fold of Russian Orthodoxy were won over miraculously as it might seem to aggressive atheism. It was as though they had been waiting for the opportune hour, and when it struck, the sluice gates were thrown open and the floods carried them out to the shoreless ocean. God and the Czar, who together had determined the course of events in Russia for better or for worse ever since the days of Vladimir, had now to yield their thrones to a board of plain men burning with unholy zeal for their own apostolic mission, and animated with fervid faith in the saving doctrines of Marx and Engels. From the schools the Deity was banished. Patriotism was systematically discouraged. A whole category of offenses theretofore punishable by law was struck out of the penal code, and every man and woman became thenceforth free to perpetrate them with impunity. Sexual offenses especially ceased to exist. Incest, abortion, sodomy,[1] and all kindred aberrations were legally permitted, indeed the government itself stepped forward at times to make abortion easy, cheap, and sure.

Many people will be thoroughly shocked at all this, and few will care to ask after the motives of the lawgiver, or to put themselves in his place. If, however, I were the *advocatus diaboli* I would point out that the best laws are those which conserve popular customs, and that all those shameful practices mentioned above had been indulged in with impunity in Russia from time immemorial, as we learn from old chronicles, from Kotoshikhin Shtshapoff, the Patriarch Philaret, and others. I well remember one awful

[1] Cf. *Das Neue Russland*, Heft 7–8, 5 Jahrgang, 1928, p. 71.

sentence penned by M. Nekliudoff in his *Book about Women:*

> We may affirm positively that if the law were to punish debauchery, concubinage, and adultery, young boys would have to officiate as judges, and all the others would be prisoners at the bar.[1]

The main difference between then and now lies in the omission of the undignified farce of a trial that frequently terminated in acquittal. But as, fortunately, I am not the *advocatus diaboli,* each reader must even judge the matter for himself.

It is worth noting, however, that the ball which the Soviets set rolling continues to revolve. In April, 1929, a numerous meeting of Austrian women was held in Vienna to protest against the law prohibiting abortion. In Copenhagen an international congress discussed and approved the Soviet legislation on these and like subjects. In Germany several articles have recently been published on the biological effects of marriage between brother and sister, tending to show that some of the ideas hitherto held as to the degeneration of the children and grandchildren are unfounded or exaggerated. In a word, the Bolshevists have contrived to moot the problem, to place it on the order of the day, and make the world realize how provisional and fleeting are our traditional definitions of morality, justice, liberty, law. . . .

Politics, duly whittled down and befittingly regulated by Marxism, was raised to the level of an independent educational discipline; engineering, nay, history itself was Marxized! Children of seven, boys and girls, were solemnly called to choose a political party and warned that once admitted to membership of Communism they must strictly

[1] *Book about Women,* p. 57.

observé the code of rules and regulations drawn up for their guidance which would thenceforth determine the whole course of their lives, and woe betide them should they fall away or be cast out of their sodality! The fate of Cain would be theirs.

The dynasty, the nobility, the aristocracy having been abolished by law or otherwise, the downtrodden peasants, together with the working men, found themselves suddenly uplifted to the vacant places on high and objects of veneration and solicitude. At a stroke they were proclaimed arbiters of the Republic, and it is in their name that the government still destroys and constructs. They occupied all the vacant places in the administration and the industries of the country for which they possessed not the slightest qualification, unless zeal for the spread of Marxism be accounted one. It very soon became manifest that they could not justify the confidence placed in them by the revolutionary chiefs, and they were at last obliged to call in experts of every description, including the contaminated kith and kin of burghers. The extensive estates once tilled by the "upper classes," who are now known as mere "drones," passed safely and without expense into the hands of the mooshik, who so long as it remains his may do whatever he lists with his farm except sell or mortgage it, and even sales of land have clandestinely taken place in far-off districts. The end of the old régime was the beginning of chaos. Liberty having been promised to the masses, license was demanded, and when not accorded was snatched, and no measures short of force availed to ensure an approach to discipline.

But the root problems that confronted the victorious revolutionary leaders were apparently beyond the powers of statecraft: to knead into one harmonious community some one hundred and fifty million individuals including

overcivilized groups on one side and mere Troglodites on the other, split up into one hundred and fifty-six tribes and tongues, to make clear and attractive to all of them the teachings and precepts of Marxism and to win them over to the changes involved by these, such, for instance, as those distasteful practices of quasi-religious altruism that run counter to the cherished notions and sentiments of the Russian people. In a word, mooshik and workman had to be metamorphosed into reasoning Communists, the latter being a not unwilling convert, but the former an individualist, obdurate and unyielding. Still graver because fraught with issues of life and death was the nationality tangle. At the very door of the Marxist Republic, for instance, a State with quasi-monarchist tendencies had sprung up, proud of its thirty million citizens and the most fertile soil in all Russia, and dangerous by reason of its positively aggressive designs. The Bolshevist rulers, however, flushed with their amazing victory over powerful enemies, and borne on the wings of a wild enthusiasm, had no misgivings as to their ability to grapple with all the tasks. But they had no time for deliberation. It was necessary to rush the work precipitately, improvising everything, to defeat overt enemies in the field, and to thwart the plots of secret wreckers in their councils, to educate or re-educate everybody despite lack of funds, of books, of schools, of masters and mistresses. It is nowise to be wondered at, therefore, that the total number of social, political, and educational structures raised during that period of dire confusion and want should bear unmistakable signs of haste and of imperfectly thought-out programs. Naturally the political style of architecture, so to say, is traceable in them all. As the philosopher Malebranche saw everything in God, so the Bolshevists behold all things in Marx. It is worth noting that this last trait

stamps every undertaking of theirs. It is their symbol, their A. M. D. G. (Ad Marxii Divi Gloriam). Marx is not merely the leader and prophet but the god of these positive atheists. He it was who conceived the marvelous Republic to which they are now giving shape and form and contents. He is the arbiter of true science, the inspirer of genuine art. Without him in the future State there is and shall be nothing.

Whatsoever these his faithful disciples put their hands to, their eyes are immovably fixed on Marxist ideals, and their schemes are drafted for the purpose of realizing these. Even the children must first be transformed into Marxists before they can be accepted as citizens. To effect this change is the main function of education. "Our future seven-year professional schools," boasts one of the Communists, "will be extremely like the type of educational establishment sketched and lauded by Marx." Precisely. There we have the ideal without turbid admixture.

The Soviets, then, in their constructive mood set themselves to build up a society *modo geometrico,* adjusting the reality to the idea, paying scant heed to adverse conditions, and none to the inherited traditions—a sheer revolutionary procedure. Every revolution has for its object the realization of the unrealizable, the creation of a complete Utopia. And the effort invariably ends as it must. For human life is the reality of realities, to which the most genial ideas have ultimately to adjust themselves, instead of vice versa.

History is worth consulting here. For it teaches that the solid frameworks and durable laws of society have invariably been the outcome of needs, of customs, of combinations and compromises. In revolutionary systems it is the other way round. There theories, speculations, fancies, are the usual driving force of tentative legislation which seldom takes root and has never yet been known

to bestow happiness upon any community. But Bolshevism ignores history and scorns to be trammeled in any respect by the past or its warnings. Its experiments must go on as though they were the very first in the field, and sometimes, it must be admitted, they turn out much better than could have been anticipated.

In Russia, which claims to be a Republic of working men, the great majority of the people are peasants.[1] Without the active coöperation or tacit assent of the latter element, therefore, no great constructive policy can be brought to a successful issue. To induce them to throw in their lot with the working men was the task to which the revolutionary leaders dedicated themselves from the outset, and have been pursuing with all the means at their disposal ever since. Now these means, although many and formidable, were not decisive, and the difficulties encountered were enormous. For one thing the Russian peasant is not socially disposed by nature, neither is he a fighter for causes. On the contrary, he is a hardened individualist streaked with mysticism like the Celt and the Spaniard, averse to rebellion. These propensities are inborn, and to root them out is almost impossible. Hence I cannot share the view expressed by some foreigners that the differences between the government and the peasantry may lead to civil war or a widespread outbreak. The peasants are patient and solicitous for their own well-being, taking little heed of the interests of others. Healthy egotism it is termed in Western politics. Moreover, their needs are few. Accustomed to sustain life on a minimum of food and clothing, the demands they make are modest, and when disappointed the complaints they utter are mild.

[1]The professional workmen number somewhat less than 4,000,000, whereas the peasants amount to 24,000,000. Together with their families the peasants total 122,000,000.

I heard one of them say: "We are badly off to-day. That can be seen by anyone. But were we better off under the Czars? Besides, we are now living in a futurist State, so we've got to wait for the future and what it will bring."

The peasant is the Atlas who bears the weight of that futurist structure. It reposes on his shoulders, for, like Atlas of old, he is immortal. In most States the tillers of the soil constitute the groundwork of the social framework. That the Russian mooshik should be called on to contribute more than his share to the expenses of the community may outrage the feelings of outlanders, but we may leave him to fight his own battle. What he resents, because the form is new and irksome, is the burden laid upon him by the townsmen who are favored by the central authorities and are the recipients of frequent favors and privileges for which he, it is affirmed, has in the last analysis to find the money. The seven-hour working day was one of those graces born of political combinations, and it may seem at variance with the true interests of the Russian workman who is not yet capable of competing with any of his foreign competitors and is living in an enchanted realm. So inefficient is the Soviet worker that in textile manufactures the products are 40 per cent. defective, while in metallurgy they are even 50 per cent. unsatisfactory, and rails guaranteed for ten years have to be changed in two or three years.[1]

The peasants, dissatisfied with the way things were going, silently carved out their own plan, curtailed the area sown by a considerable amount, and when the corn was harvested in it was found that there was no margin left for export. This was a keen disappointment to the organizers of the collective system. But the principal effect it appears

[1]These data are supplied by the Soviet authorities themselves—a convincing proof of their determination to remedy those defects.

to have had on them has been to spur them on to devise other and more efficient schemes. The most brilliant of these was for the purpose of rendering the Union independent of the peasants and of securing corn enough for home consumption and the foreign market. I have already alluded to this project, which is a refreshing manifestation of elastic minds, and whatever its outcome may be is worthy of admiration as a brilliant move. The plan is briefly this: to create a colossal State farm which shall be tended by diligent trained workers disposing of everything indispensable, all kinds of tractors and engines in abundance. Over three hundred and seventeen million roubles have already been allotted for the carrying out of this remarkable experiment—probably only a first installment. The soil selected for the purpose is not perhaps as fertile as that of many other places, especially in the southern provinces, which for cogent reasons were passed over. Lying between the Sea of Azoff and the Caspian, the soil has absorbed a slight touch of salt from the river Manytsk that renders it less suited for wheat cultivation. That, however, is more a prediction uttered by prophets of evil than the serene verdict of a competent judge. Experts were consulted at the outset, as is the wont of Sovietist projectors, and the prognostication is said to have been encouraging. In that model estate in the remote wilderness one can find everything necessary for the industrialization of agriculture on a large scale as it is understood in Moscow: a sufficiency of magnificent tractors, a profusion of Ford motors, a legion of nimble workers, garages, outhouses, granaries, dazzling electric light, schools, clubs, and moving-picture shows without which no Sovietist undertaking is conceivable; in a word, it may be termed one of the largest, most compact, and best-equipped compounds in the world in which all kinds of experiments, from corn-grow-

ing to sheep-breeding on scientific lines, are being continually made. It is the occasional butt of wits in Russia and elsewhere, but the thoroughness with which it has been built up and equipped with the assistance of trained German specialists calls for greater reserve and a more grounded judgment as soon as adequate data are available.

If this venture turn out well, some irksome problems will have been solved satisfactorily, and the Soviets will have broken fresh ground for further innovations. In the meanwhile they go on perseveringly with their own pet scheme for the industrialization of agriculture within a period of five years, for which they issued an internal loan while I was there in October, 1928. The peasants at that time hurried into the city banks in myriads to invest their savings, display their loyalty, and comply with their tacit obligations. It is asserted that few of them take the matter to heart. Their thoughts run rather on the low prices fixed for their corn, on the high prices they must pay for their implements and for the clothes and footwear of their women and children. Worrying cares and heavy penalties. And strangers can perceive no escape. But for the Russian peasant there is always an escape, and for his hardships and mishaps there is always a remedy. In some cases the rural household has placidly gone back to the occupations of olden times, and taken to spinning, weaving, carding wool, making bast shoes, and generally competing on a humble but adequate scale with the great State Coöperative. These are interesting moves and counter moves in life's game.

The Russian peasants, then, are meek and forbearing when not provoked beyond endurance. Since my first acquaintanceship with them I have never ceased to regard them as a race apart, the conception and life of whose members, despite their apparent simplicity and trans-

parency, have an opaque and mysterious background of which few but themselves are aware. They are the enduring elements of the population, outliving mechanics and rulers, priests and faiths, political and social structures, of which they take scant account. Politics, as such, has never had any attraction for them. They have for ages been absorbed by their own world. Hence their character, as distinguished from their meager cultural acquisitions, has hardly been touched by the secular waves of change. Their slow movements have been marked in Russian history by the rhythm of inexorable fate. At times they can get intoxicated with the word for an idea which they are incapable of grasping beyond the circumstance that it seems useful to themselves, and they will cheerfully undergo a martyr's death for a principle—especially a religious principle—which they are unable to formulate. That was so in the old days when I first went to live among them. Many years later I wrote:[1]

> The suggestibility of the people is almost unlimited. You can tell the Russian masses almost any absurdity, and move them to make costly sacrifices for the acquisition of the unattainable.

Such were the Russian peasants as I knew or fancied I knew them in the reign of Alexander II and as I described them over a quarter of a century later. And now? I had long been anxious to get into contact with them again; but in the meanwhile I could not rid my memory of the view recently put forward by one of the characters in a Bolshevist novel, who, thoroughly familiar with the ways of the peasants, palmed himself off as one of them.

> I don't know [he wrote to his sister] what tangible good the change of name brings to those lazy-bones. Those dear mooshiks of ours go

[1] In the year 1906. See the *Outlook* for February 10th of that year.

tramping about in bast shoes just as they did before, they scratch their heads in precisely the same way in an effort to guess on what day Fortune will knock at their gates, they are famine-stricken as they used to be, and worse still, they have lost their heads entirely, in consequence of the overdose of teachers and authorities. . . . They want to live and arrange their lives somehow without socialism, each one in his own corner, and their whole philosophy is summed up in the words: "to live and have plenty to eat."[1]

Needless to say, that is the commentary of a cynic.

The plain truth would seem to be that the Russian peasants have been treated ever since history has taken notice of them as mere taxpaying machines, whose well-being, families, and lives mattered little or nothing, the one important concern being to see whether they played their part in the community or left taxes unpaid. During the famine of 1890-1891 the principal monthly review wrote:

It is a matter of surprise how people manage even to exist who are thus ground down on all sides and ruined, who live in a state of perpetual hunger, are helpless against any schemer instructed in the arts of reading and writing who comes along, who have spent all their spiritual force in a vain struggle against a combination of injustice, arbitrariness and violence, and can nowhere hope to find defence and shelter.[2]

Many of the famine-stricken fled they knew not whither. As for those who stayed on in Russia until they paid their last debt to nature—they never contrived to pay it to insatiable man—their doom would move the most hard-hearted to pity. It is not merely that their lots and huts were disposed of by auction to pay arrears of taxation, their labor itself was sold for the benefit of the govern-

[1] *In the Light of the Lantern*, by George Nikiforoff.

[2] Cf. *The Messenger of Europe*, October, 1890, p. 778.

ment, and they were systematically flogged and treated as English Jews used to be by greedy Plantagenet kings.

By what advantages [asks the *Law Messenger*] is this use of the lash compensated? By none. Flogging does not thresh out the taxes or the arrears, but brutalizes the man subjected to it. Suppose he have money which he is hiding, he will of course pay up before he submits to this infamous and extremely painful punishment; and if he does not pay under these circumstances, it is obvious that he has not the wherewithal. We could not admit the contrary unless the ordeal of flogging freed him from all further obligation. This, however, it does not. To whip a man, therefore, who has been unsuccessful in obtaining the necessary sum, notwithstanding the present extreme difficulty of earning anything, and the terribly low rate of wages, is a deed of the most crying barbarity. You sell his property by auction, you break up his farm and home and compel him, by means of physical suffering and infamy, to expiate his misfortune, but the upshot of all your measures is that the "man" perishes, and you see in his stead a desperate exasperated individual who works harm to himself and is fraught with danger to others.[1]

For this flogging of the penniless mooshik under Czarism a technical term was coined: "the threshing out of taxation."

One of the most striking sketches of the peasantry in those gloomy days was penned by a literary man whom I occasionally met and who is still living in Moscow. M. Nemirovitch-Dantshenko journeyed through the Volga provinces investigating the economic condition of the peasants, and his verdict, published in a book which he wrote at the time,[2] was impressive.

If my wanderings impressed me with a vivid notion of Russia's immensity, they completely shattered my notions of her abundance. . . . The peasants are compelled in winter to work in factories in

[1] *Law Messenger*, November, 1890, pp. 377-378.

[2] *The Kama and the Ural*, St. Petersburg, 1890, p. 191.

order to earn a miserable existence, which neither their own land nor subsidiary agricultural labor affords them. And yet in spite of all that, such is their need that to purchase food *they have had to sell their dwelling houses as fuel for the furnaces of the works,* while they betook themselves to cages. . . . It is scandalous that St. Petersburg should refuse to take these things to heart. Russia may be ruined for all St. Petersburg cares, whose sole concern is that the taxpaying capacities of the masses should suffice for the support of the intelligent and governing classes; but at the price of what bloody sweat these taxes are earned, it recks not one jot. . . . Suffering, tortured, ruined people! Who will stand up for you? It seems as if there were no crawling thing that does not feed upon you! My conception of Russia is that of a huge giant put to sleep by magic spells; every unclean and slimy thing has meanwhile crept upon him, every species of vermin is continuously gnawing him without satisfying its greed. Lichens are on him and mosses have grown over him. His body is stretched out upon the ground, and a forest has grown up around him; and in the forest God's light is absent; darkness alone prevails.[1]

Such has been the peasants' place in the community from time immemorial under the heel of the various governments, and for them the government meant the town. Between town and country there never has been any love lost. The town has always enjoyed special privileges, while the country has been neglected. Hence the slowness with which the latter has now moderated its unneighborly feelings toward the former. They blend very imperfectly and are soon once more asunder. For the peasants complain that their main function is ever the same: to sustain all other social groups as well as the State, and to pay for the blunders of these into the bargain.

Since the October Revolution, Russian agriculture has passed through two stages and is now about to enter a third. In the first, which ended in the year 1921, it was laid down that the tilling of the land belongs to no individual but to

[1]See *Russian Characteristics,* pp. 385-386.

the community. This principle harmed both industry and agriculture in the Republic and was abrogated in the year 1921 when the second period began, during which the peasant was given elbow room and allowed to consider himself and his family. He contrived to flourish, the pre-war area of sowing was attained, and the value of the produce was equal to that, say, of 1913.

The third period, making room for a new departure, is about to be inaugurated, and a heated wrangle is going on as to the regulations that will be laid down for the guidance of the peasants. So far as one can judge, besides the development of the productive forces of the peasantry the strengthening of the Socialist structure will be the main care of the government and, therefore, the spread and development of collectivism will be promoted by every means. The ideal pursued is the speedy realization of collectivism. The families of one or more villages would then "join hands and money bags" and work together on equal terms as partners in the concern, pooling their earnings and paying each one his quota for the improved implements which they would purchase from the State at its own price, and then selling the produce to the State Coöperative for whatever sum it might decide to pay.

This experiment is naturally unpopular with many of those concerned, despite the elaborate preparations to smooth its way and render it palatable which have been going on for a considerable time. For example, farmers were classified as poor, medium, and well-to-do or koolaks, and as the first named were assumed to be willing to follow the government's lead they received preferential treatment in advance and were expected to further collectivism. The koolaks, on the other hand, were looked upon as an insubordinate lot of whom it would be meet to deal hard measure until they saw the folly of their ways. If, how-

ever, it be true that most of the "poor" farmers are those who, in consequence of listlessness, drunkenness, and other personal faults, have gone to wrack and ruin, their supposed readiness to combine with those who labor and save and are careful to adjust means to ends is intelligible and ill omened. It is equally intelligible that the koolaks who made husbandry pay, raising the amount and value of the produce to pre-war levels, should show a sour mien when confronted with this unexpected change and all that it implies.

According to the new bill, for the poor peasants there will be a complete redistribution of farms, whereby the koolaks will be ousted from their present holdings, which they have made valuable, and will be relegated to less fertile plots at a farther distance from their dwellings. Then they are to be deprived of the electoral vote, and as a consequence they will also forfeit the decisive voice which they have hitherto had in the rural community—a most important matter, for it enabled them to settle current questions that closely interested themselves and their fellows. Furthermore, the koolaks are to undergo restrictions in the matter of renting land and hiring workmen, and to be more highly assessed for taxation. In a word, they will be submitted to painful pressure.

This bill is to return to the system of 1919 which proclaimed that the usufruct of the soil should not belong to individuals but only to the community. The outcome of that essay cannot have satisfied the government, seeing that in the year 1922 it inaugurated a new line of agricultural legislation which created for the tillers of the soil better conditions which were hailed with pleasure. This statute was followed by a marked improvement in the prospects of husbandry throughout the Republic. The mooshik became prosperous, the State profited by his earnings, and things

brightened up generally. No such results are anticipated from the application of the new enactment, and the attitude of the koolaks is the reverse of inspiring.

At present the final touches are being given to the clearing of the way for the promulgation of the new law. Surveyors are being sent to measure the land and place boundary stones to divide off lot from lot. But as soon as they have gone the koolaks harness their horses to a cart and having removed the boundary stones transport them to the dwelling of the local representative of the government and dump them down before his door. In some places the surveyor is beaten or killed. These signs of the times are deplorable. Whether the new bill and the attitude of the government toward the peasantry will conciliate the spirits, time alone will show.

Domestic critics, who are the most severe, maintain that the new ordering will but protract the provisional conditions that have prevailed since the October Revolution and effectually destroy the feeling of confidence and security which hitherto buoyed up the peasants and without which small harvests, food scarcity, a stoppage of foreign trade, higher cost of living, and generally an agricultural "landslide" must be looked for. They add that the bulk of the peasants turn scornfully away from all such legislation. The predicament of the government thus placed between political considerations and economic and financial needs is trying. But among the Soviet irons in the fire is the vast State farm sketched above which was created and equipped between the Caspian and the Azoff seas.

Among themselves the peasants may fall out over their individual interests, but once outsiders try to meddle in their affairs all their internal differences are forgotten, and they present a firm, albeit wholly unorganized, front and invincible obstinacy to the marplot, whoever he may be.

And these too are their tactics in their differences with the Central government without any understanding among themselves. Despite this fitful gregariousness they never cease to be individuals, self-centered and self-composed. For example, they resent *a priori* legislation that clashes with their local concerns and when feasible ignore it. Thus, many of them disapprove the arbitrary division of the rural population into poor, middle, and well-to-do. They chafe and growl at the rigorous treatment meted out to the koolaks by the authorities because, for one thing, every peasant, however poor he may be to-day, cherishes the hope that he may scrape together the wherewithal to become a koolak to-morrow and also because his nearest benefactor is precisely the money-lending, work-giving koolak. How then could he help to get rid of him? But the peasants will never rise up in arms against the government in order to have that legislation abrogated. Beyond making away with some of the most obnoxious local representatives of the authorities they will do nothing.

"Koolak" is a word which etymologically means "fist" and figuratively "usurer." The koolaks of the old régime were the successful peasant farmers who by corruption, injustice, and hard work had hoarded a little fortune and acquired a corresponding influence in their villages. If they oppressed their fellow villagers they were hated by these, and at times were discreetly made away with. The people framed a proverb on the subject which I have often heard quoted in the country. It might be rendered thus: "The koolak is not a blessing, yet you cannot move a finger without him." To-day the obnoxious name "koolak" has been imposed on those enterprising villagers who with a sharp appetite for a competence labor indefatigably to secure it, and incidentally by so doing raise the economic level of their village and district. Although this rise in

the field of social well-being is decried as a downright hindrance to the realization of Marxism, it is, none the less, unchangeably the goal of the peasant's striving, the source of his inspiration and enterprise. And the clash of these antagonistic tendencies is likely to enhance the difficulties of the government and protract the daring social experiment it has undertaken. One may fairly assume that the secular spirit of the Russian mooshik cannot have undergone a fundamental change during the brief period that began since the war, when he was characterized by extraordinary powers of endurance, a firm belief in fate, a strong dislike to coöperation, a fund of latent cruelty, and the complete absence of revolutionary proclivities.

When tyrannized over beyond measure, the rural population were capable then as now of avenging themselves on their hard-hearted landlords or officials in terribly ferocious ways. I remember one case that occurred many years ago near Peterhof in which they carried off the ill-starred landowner to the skirt of a forest hard by a swamp, bound his right leg to a stout poplar sapling which they had bent to an angle of many degrees, and his left leg to another poplar held down in the opposite direction. They then let the two trees rebound to their natural position, and gloated over the soul-searing screams of the victim who was torn in halves. For many years afterward the villagers used to see or hear his restless ghost at night. This was exactly the same horrible death as was inflicted upon the legendary Russian hero, Igor, in Kieff, by the Slav tribe of the Drevlyany one thousand years before. Even these manifestations of vengeance and ferocity have undergone no change, so conservative are the masses in the country districts. During the outbreaks and massacres of 1905-1907 I recollect the official description of the acts of vengeance perpetrated

by the peasants on the well-to-do classes of Moscow, Tomsk, and other Siberian towns. The favorite procedure was to kindle a roaring fire in a public square and slowly roast the doomed wretches who, uttering inhuman cries, would dash off hither and thither in mad attempts to flee, but were always driven back with long poles to the accompaniment of obscene jokes. Gorky more than once has described the standing characteristics of the mooshik.

It is worth noting that hitherto the peasants always met their own wrongs with demands only for their redress, not for revolutionary change, and having compassed their end were accustomed to settle down resignedly to their humdrum existence. In other words, they sought always to suppress certain symptoms of the evil which affected themselves without striking at its root or giving a thought to the wrongs put upon others. Even after the Crimean War, no irreconcilable hostility to the régime as such was noticeable, although it was impressively preached to them by various professional "Nihilists." The bulk of the peasantry, therefore, can hardly be deemed to have been ripe for revolution in October, 1917. But when Lenin dangled the prospect of the coveted land before their eyes they swallowed the bait greedily. What they hoped for, however, was full ownership as they had known it under the Czars, with documents drawn up in quaint terms by the public notary, with seals, signatures, and solemn formulas. This, however, was a rank political heresy from which they had to be weaned. Lenin's ideal was that all the soil should belong to the community and be tilled by local coöperative groups, the Central government acting as trustee of the peasants, buying the agricultural produce at low rates and selling it abroad at prices that would beat foreign competition. Now these two systems are mutually incompat-

ible, and people are anxious to learn which one will outlive the other.

Such is the origin of the fateful discrepancy between peasantry and government, a discrepancy which may be characterized by an old Russian saying: "The scythe has struck a rock." The peasant, when defending his interests, is impervious to argument, and his obstinacy is invincible. He belongs to those races whose members by keeping silence express much and by speaking reveal nothing. If he appear to give way it is only for the purpose of obtaining a truce to enable him to strengthen his resistance. And when thoroughly exasperated he has recourse to violence or any other drastic methods of "direct action" within his reach, as in the case of the government "correspondents" to-day —men who reside in the villages and keep the authorities informed as to who is well-to-do there and should be more heavily taxed, etc. Many of them have come to an untimely end of late. The official newspapers in Moscow frankly describe the incidents of this muffled war between the apostles of Marxism pure and simple and the husbandmen whose forbears have been living on the land for thousands of years and feel that their offspring will still be attached to it in thousands of years to come. Shots in the dark, attacks on the correspondents by men who cannot be identified, the wounding or murder of land surveyors, the employment of incendiarism, are the weapons of the peasantry. Those misdeeds the discontented mooshik commits with forethought and thoroughness despite the risk of death to which they expose him. For the spirit of Pugatshoff and Stenka Razin is still a latent force in the country districts, where from time to time it embodies itself in fearless stalwart countrymen and perpetrates deeds of blood and fire.

In the meanwhile the Soviets, on their side nowise dis-

heartened, continue to preach Marxist orthodoxy undiluted, to which the mooshiks appear to be almost as deaf as were Ulysses's comrades to the Sirens' songs. The Soviet doctrine is permeated with altruism, calls for heavy personal sacrifices, and in its highest flights presupposes a vocation. It also necessitates in those who probe things methodically the unlearning of much that is commonly accepted as indisputable by the rest of mankind. Then, again, history has to be rewritten for it and brought into accord with Marxist theories—a violent wrench: tradition must be set aside and ancient institutions pulled down. In a word, the past has to be blotted out while the new dispensation—improvised and variable—is held up as an inexhaustible source of prosperity for the working population and the sheet anchor of salvation for all. Stark materialism, one of the principal dogmas of the new era, the correlate of communism, claims acceptance as an adequate substitute for religion, and an infallible touchstone by which true science is distinguished from spurious. It is with the teaching of these latter-day theses that all the educational establishments—elementary, intermediate, and superior—are chiefly concerned. These provisos complicate the interesting Sovietist experiment and enhance one's admiration for those who conceived it.

What the peasants resented far more than aught else was interference with their own traditional modes of living. These customs the Soviets refused to countenance. The new ruling idea to which everything is being made subservient is the industrialization of agriculture; i.e., henceforth the land was to be tilled not by individual peasants left to their stale devices and meager means, but by powerful combinations of villages and districts which would trustingly pool their live stock and liquid money, yield up their possessions for the use of all, and assign their gains to

the collective body. Those collectivist expending groups would begin by purchasing the very latest agricultural machines and implements from the United States and Germany and then go to work with these, increasing the yield fifty- or a hundred-fold and bringing wealth and prosperity to the great Marxist State. The collective organization was thus to be potent while each individual composing it was to be the revered but Unknown Soldier. At first this innovation met with a cold reception, and it is still combated by those husbandmen who have toiled, thrown their bread upon the waters, and received it back after many days with enormous increment. But those others who are impecunious, unthrifty, and chary of exertion are said to lend a willing ear to the new doctrine, and in fact to have already assimilated it. . . . In many places scattered over the land nuclei of these associations are making a stir. The types vary. In some of them not only is the machinery and inventory handed over to the managers of the organization, but also the sustenance of the live stock, the repair of the implements, and even the payment of the taxes. The type of community differs according to places, needs, and tastes; hitherto three several forms have been developed, in one of which coöperation becomes extremely close, cutting deep into the private life of the individual.

To everybody's surprise it has recently been found that in many places the koolaks have contrived to undermine the Sovietist governing "apparatus" and to win over to their side all the local State institutions and their administrators, from the president of the village down to the poorest day laborer there and even the revisor sent by the State. For five years the population of the village of Yekaterinovka—one of many—was stultified by the president of the local committee, Anekin, and his brother the secretary, who, in the name of the law, allotted the best land to the koolaks

and the very worst to the "poor" husbandmen. In many provinces pseudo-collectivist groups were formed by the koolaks which claimed to be the genuine ideal of the government and had their claim allowed. The head of the revising body dispatched by the government, who is an expert coöperativist, actually declared that the object of the coöperative system is to further the interests of the peasants, and that the poor elements ought to be banished altogether! When the president of another village council was asked officially whether there were many koolaks in his place, he made answer that there were none, and therefore no individuals liable to excess taxes. As this report awakened suspicion, a thorough investigation was made. It was discovered that there were forty-one koolak farms in the place, and that, whereas the State granaries were empty of grain, oil, etc., one koolak had hidden away two and a half tons of barley, three tons of sunflower seeds, and the same amount of sunflower oil, a hundredweight and a half of flour, and so on. This discovery has revealed the fact that the koolaks have taken up strong positions in the Republic, utilizing the services of their poorer fellow villagers.

The koolaks will prove a hard nut to crack.

Famine and its consequences constituted another of the pressing problems which the Soviets had to encounter, and responsibility for which is laid entirely on their shoulders by most outsiders. As a matter of fact, the causes go much farther back. The civil war, to say nothing of the World War that preceded it, was a disaster unparalleled in recent Russian history. It threatened with destruction the government, the State, and the masses. While it lasted people were struck down in myriads as by Apollo's lethal arrows—six millions by disease and five millions by famine, to say nothing of the losses in the field. Famine, unhappily, is

an old acquaintance in Russia, and has never yet been eliminated. In the year 1892 I wrote:

Famine in Russia is periodical like the snows, or rather it is perennial like the Siberian plague. To be scientifically accurate, one should distinguish two different varieties of it—the provincial and the national, the former termed "golodovka," or the little hunger, and the latter "golod," or the great hunger. Not a year ever elapses in which extreme distress in some province or provinces of the Empire does not assume the dimensions of a famine, while rarely a decade passes away in which the local misfortune does not ripen into the national calamity. If we go back as far as the year 996 and follow the course of Russian history down to the year of grace 1892, we shall find that, while the little hunger is an annual incident, as familiar as the destruction of human lives by wolves, the normal number of national famines fluctuates between seven and eight per century. And it is impossible not to note in passing that the circumstance that we can thus discourse of the periodicity of this terrible scourge of the nation, much as astronomers and meteorologists talk of the return of a comet or of the showers of shooting stars, is balm to the hearts of Russian tshinovniks, who are delighted to be able to fix upon "a law of nature" responsibility for their own misgovernment.[1] In the reign of the first Christian prince of Russia, St. Vladimir, hunger mowed down the people in thousands; in 1024 the famine caused a bloody insurrection, after the quelling of which the demand for food still available was very considerably lessened. In 1123 and 1128 the population of the north of Russia was decimated by hunger, and thousands fed on the leaves of limes, the bark of birches, soft worm-eaten wood, ground pine bark mixed with chopped straw, and likewise the "carcasses of horses." In 1130 hunger raged throughout the whole land. In 1137 the inhabitants of central Russia were made acquainted with all the horrors of the famine of 1123. In 1162, 1171, 1173, 1188, 1212, and 1214, the sufferings of the people from starvation almost exceed belief: "dogs, cats, and putrid carrion were titbits out of the reach of the many." In 1229 a famine began which lasted for three years without interruption, during which the peasants and lower classes "slew living people and devoured

[1]Cf. for instance the *Novoye Vremya* (September 29, 1891), which discovers in this periodicity of the famine a reason for regarding the phenomenon in a hopeful light.

them and also ate carrion and moss, and firs and leaves." In 1284 there was a "mighty hunger in the land, and men and women ate their own children." In 1308 and 1394 the dearth of food was so great that "grass, roots, rotten wood, and carrion" were the staple food. In 1422, 1436, 1445, 1448, 1468, 1478, etc., down to the end of last century, the same horrible tale was periodically narrated with the same gruesome details by the conscientious annalists.

The destruction of the young and middle-aged that has decimated Russia twice over since 1914 brought to a complete standstill everything that had been making for progress, for economical well-being, and for well-ordered finances. All connection with what had been accomplished or attempted by statesmen like Witte and Stolypin, and indeed most of the links with the past, were utterly destroyed. And so it has come about that to-day the land, like the sleeping princess of fairy story surrounded by priceless treasures, awaits the coming of Prince Charming to awaken it to new life and activity. Is Bolshevism that beneficent liberator? If so, it has not yet uttered the magic words.

One never-to-be-forgotten disaster with which the Bolshevists had to deal was the episode of the outcast children who roamed about the country without a roof to their heads, shoes to their feet, or regular food or drink. Their stunted little bodies, almost naked, were infected by foul diseases. They kept together in groups that now swelled, now dwindled, devouring ribgrass, chewing the leaves of young birch or the bark of trees, the most desperate swallowing rags and dying in agonies, while others had recourse to expedients too gruesome to describe. Their souls one would have thought must have been infected by their disfigured bodies, for the language they employed was often that of hardened criminals; and yet some of their selfless acts could have sprung only from creatures not whoolly

debased by their loathsome surroundings: some were seen to divide their last morsel with a companion. These Lilliputians, like beasts of prey, swept down upon this district or that, striking terror into passers-by. They succumbed to hunger, to hunger typhus, to loathsome diseases, and the ground was bestrewn with their hideous corpses. In vain one searches the annals of Europe for a parallel to this ghastly phenomenon. One might perhaps be tempted to think of the medieval lepers, were it not that these were never very numerous, were never allowed to prowl over the land, and were not left to perish of hunger and thirst. A comparison with the children's crusades would be equally out of place, seeing that altogether they did not number one hundredth part of the homeless Russian children. Seven millions all told, divided into large and small gangs, fleeing from the towns, scattered over the country roads, halting at night along railway lines, sleeping in outhouses, in boilers that had not yet cooled down, in lime-kilns, in dust bins, feeding together with cattle, and even fighting with animals over morsels of offal. Strangely enough many of these "youthful law-breakers," as they were euphemistically termed, were addicted to morphium, cocaine, alcohol. Little girls from eight years onward gave themselves up to sexual vice, and murder often swelled the list of their misdeeds. Cynical, shameless, with no gleam of hope except through crime, and no fear of God or man, they would seek out unprotected travelers, ask them for alms, and if dissatisfied with the giver's offering would malignantly bite and infect him with their own disgusting diseases. To wayfarers in deserted by-ways at night they gave short shrift. In such direct ways did they revenge themselves on the society that had left them to perish. The government, preoccupied with endless troubles of its own and struggling desperately for its existence, stretched out its

hand to save them, but it might as well have tried to fight a hurricane with a pitchfork. Short-lived alleviation it contrived to bestow upon a fraction of those innocent victims, but salvation was beyond its powers. How many boys and girls drifted helplessly to their awful doom nobody will ever know. The authorities affirm that more than seven millions of them passed thus onward into the night. Seven millions!

In those days of stress the needs of the Republics were enormous, and the financial resources available for any purpose but self-defence were but as dust in the balance. In other words, Fate was at work scathing and blighting the seven million tiny ones. Fate, cruel and implacable. How and where these bairns perished history is unable to say. In the year 1922 the number still wasting away, cankered, yet hovering like ghouls over villages and towns with no roof over them, and in want of food and clothing, was reduced, largely by death, but also to a perceptible extent by the measures of relief which the authorities hurriedly adopted, organized, carried out, and went on increasing when opportunity offered. Within the ensuing three years the Children's Army of Doom was reduced to three hundred thousand, and a twelvemonth later to half that number. To-day it has dropped farther, to about seventy-five thousand. During my stay in the Union I fully expected to come in contact with bands of survivors in the country, but my anticipation was not fulfilled. I met poor waifs and strays in villages, but they were of a wholly different class and were neither homeless, famishing, nor vindictive.

It would be a gross mistake to lay the blame for this terrible tragedy at the door of the Bolshevists, even in the loose sense in which revolutionists are always made answerable for the immediate consequences of the upheaval which they helped to bring about. It would be equally erroneous

to assert that the enormous falling off recently recorded in the number of the miserable wanderers was entirely the work of the government. A third error into which many observers fall is the assumption that the fate of those millions of innocent bairns was a passing episode now happily over and done with and never again to be apprehended, a nightmare that vanished together with the dream and now to be dismissed from one's memory forever. During my stay in Sovietdom I was told that there were still seventy-five thousand of those waifs and strays on the highways hanging onto the skirts of manufacturing towns. Seventy-five thousand? I repeated. Well, there might be more or there might be less, the number could not be fixed with precision, the only thing certain being that the source of this running social sore will not be dried up for a long while.

The measures adopted by the State to remedy the evil were proportionate not indeed to the magnitude of the visitation but to its own slender resources. For the maintenance of every child to whom it gave refuge it could afford to spend only from 100 to 130 roubles a year—the merest pittance—and it took charge of some three hundred thousand of them in asylums where the utmost that could be attempted on that allowance was to keep the little ones from dying, not from desiring to die—thousands ran away and were lost to human ken—but it actually saved several hundred thousands.

A new leaf was turned in the year 1927, when a Soviet Congress adopted a comprehensive plan for putting an end once for all to this Moloch sacrifice within a term of three years, and in the meanwhile 190 roubles a year—still an insufficient sum—are being spent on each child supported by the State. This increased contribution was followed by better fare and a noticeable drop in the percentage of run-

aways. And what is more to the point, workshops have been opened in the Russian Republic for the purpose of teaching children from the age of thirteen the trades of carpenter, shoemaker, turner, bookbinder, etc. These establishments have had excellent results. They became so popular and grew so rapidly that there were sixteen hundred and twenty of them last November, in which more than thirty thousand children were being trained. Factories and works have also been erected and equipped in various manufacturing districts for the express purpose of completing the beneficent scheme of qualifying youth for serious occupations under normal conditions and paying them fair wages for their labor. The boast that these experiments, or at any rate some of them, are already being carried out not only without loss to the factories but with considerable profit suggests a miracle or a mystification, but neither is involved. The clue to the mystery lies in the fact that the government, being the chief buyer and seller in the Republic, supplies those industrial concerns with raw materials at preferential prices so much below those that rule in the country generally that normal competition is excluded. Add to this the decisive circumstance that it can sell in the home markets at almost any price it likes to fix and make up any deficiency caused by the buying. The phenomenon, therefore, is hardly more than what airmen would call a "stunt."

The causes of the immolation of children, in spite of what has been done to remove them, are still operative. Moreover, the remedial measures adopted by the Russian Republic have not yet been extended to the other States of the Union, besides which they are still admittedly defective. One of the permanent fountainheads of the evil is the all too frequent breakdown of the family, followed by the dispersal of its resourceless members and the bar-

barous way in which the children are thrust aside by selfish, heartless adults. A man who has founded and maintained a family dies, for example, and his land is transferred to another. That other takes possession and turns the dead man's children adrift. The helpless little creatures having no friends or neighbors to go to for assistance—callousness being the characteristic of the rural population to-day—they wander aimlessly over the face of the earth.

It cannot be denied that to-day the family as a unity is being slowly disintegrated by various causes, its place being taken by an economic nucleus as the lowest unit in the community. It is but fair to add, however, that under the Czarist régime a somewhat similar process on a less extensive scale was noticeable, especially in the northern provinces, where marriage tended to become a purely economic arrangement the object of which was to provide a certain number of hands to attend to the land, the live stock, and the household.

The ease with which divorce is obtainable to-day is said to have something to do with the gradual dismemberment of the family. It may be so, but the number of divorces —in round numbers one hundred thousand—does not afford sufficient grounds for the assumption.

CHAPTER VII

THE CULTURAL CAMPAIGN

As soon as ever they were able to size up the internal situation and plan out a policy of their own, the Soviets organized a campaign against illiteracy. The crass ignorance of the masses, which almost exceeds belief, they strove to dispel all at once as by the waving of a magician's wand —an undertaking comparable to the removal of mountains by prayer, which although said to be possible has generally proved dishearteningly difficult. But the Bolshevist master having issued the order on the ground that reading and writing are the first steps toward Marxism, the rank and file went to work with a will to execute it. Neither money nor exertions were grudged. As the State, however, could not shoulder the entire financial and pedagogical burden alone, the help of groups and individuals became indispensable and the question cropped up, who could and should contribute to the work. Lunacharsky I believe it was who uttered the sentence: "Unless we can secure the coöperation of the proletariat we are wasting words." That settled the matter. The appeal for coöperation called forth an instantaneous and hearty response. Workmen, professional groups, and social organizations allotted considerable sums from their own special funds, peripatetic pedagogues journeyed about the country blithely sowing the seeds of culture among adults, who at first could not be made to comprehend why they should go to school at their time of life, and when sent there were

minded to play truant. Sunday campaigns were organized by bodies of juvenile culture bearers whose zeal, fervid and touching, often outran their judgment. The results were rapid and encouraging but unstable. They sadly lacked finality. In a very short time hundreds of teachers had to be dismissed, hundreds of schools had to be closed, and many of the grown-ups who had strained their inelastic memory and mastered their lessons by rote soon forgot them again, and without qualms or heartburning fell back into the ranks of the illiterate, and the optimism of the preachers of the new gospel was put to a cruel test. Every year the sun of enlightenment had to rise anew in the east and west simultaneously with reinforced vigor, improved methods, and a heavier outlay. The "liquidation of illiteracy," as it is officially termed, is making perceptible headway, but there are still some eight million adults in the Russian Republic alone who are unable to read or write, and in the other republics a correspondingly larger percentage, and the available funds are lower than before. The percentage of children, too, who are beyond the pale of the schools is as high as sixty-two. A writer who has looked into the subject more closely affirms that Soviet Russia stands only in the twenty-seventh place among the nations, but that even so it is above Greece, Jugoslavia, Spain, Lithuania, and British India.[1]

In pedagogy as in politics the Soviet leaders are so dazzled by the brilliant prospects of partial successes that they sometimes fail to discern or to assess aright the root-reaching results which almost without an exertion and certainly with but a provisional sacrifice on their part they might bring about. Some people ask whether they are not marching past their goal and missing a unique opportunity.

With the education of the children, progress was remark-

[1]Cf. *Poslednya Novosti*, December 1, 1928.

ably rapid. The Soviets, despite their many cares, tackled the work adroitly, approaching the mind of the young generation from various points and employing every known method, every approved device to imbue them with the new notions. It is instructive to follow the various expedients by which the revolutionary leaders emerged from the numerous critical predicaments in which they were placed by foes or circumstance. For example, when the Revolution was barely over and pedagogy in all its forms was at a very low ebb, the Bolshevist chiefs, without books or other aids, founded an Academy of Narrations in Moscow, whose function was to tell to the children in simple language the history of an event or the gist of a poem or other literary work. And they visited the provinces and unburdened themselves of their welcome message before eager bairns throughout the land. This form of instruction has always been held in high esteem by Russians. In Moscow a member of this Academy who was a past master in the art of holding his audiences spellbound, went out into the streets of the capital and narrated in easy mellifluous phrases the poem of Roland to a concourse of delighted listeners, young and old, who increased in number till the thoroughfares were blocked. The incident as described to me must have resembled that of the Pied Piper of Hamelin and his fascinated audience. From revolutionary Russia the practice found its way to New York, Boston, and Chicago, and, I believe, back again to Europe in a slightly modified American dress. I know from the little that has come under my personal observation that much of the inspiration that sustains the genuine workers to-day was imbibed in those schools, consciously and unconsciously. One of the usual effects of this half culture is to render those who receive it opinionated, intolerant, and impervious to argument, but these are precisely the qualities that go to make a suc-

cessful apostle and are rated accordingly. The children are flattered by the importance attached to their choice of a political party at an age when they knew not what they do; they are inebriated by the praise and distinction bestowed upon them for quickness of apprehension, which is often hardly more than a retentive memory, and they become plastic in the hands of those who provide them with materials for independent research and encourage them to criticize their elders, especially in matters touching upon religion.

What the October revolutionists have accomplished by these means in the sphere of culture is colossal in magnitude, questionable in quality, and fateful in its consequences to the entire world. Call it a forward or a backward movement, as you will, it connotes a root-reaching change the like of which for vastness and intensity mankind has probably never yet experienced, and the effects of which bid fair to impart a wholly new direction to the course of human history. For the Bolshevist ferment is continuously and ubiquitously operative, and its force, atom-like, is incalculable. It has not yet permeated all layers of the motley population: many even of the elect shake it off mechanically, and there are some Oriental tribes still indocile who blithely transgress the most sacred Marxist precepts and smile, blandly unconscious of guilt, when chidden for their fickleness. But the ferment, which is not quite the same thing as concrete Bolshevism or Communism, is bound in the fullness of time to leaven in varying degrees the entire mass of humanity and bring about a fundamental upheaval in the social and political world.

In various parts of Sovietdom the obstacles to any kind of progress were at first deterrent, and the very instruments for overcoming them had first to be fashioned. For the ruthless civil war spared nothing. The most enlightened

of all the States, excepting Russia, which were to become members of the Union was that of the Ukraine, and one of the institutions of which it was especially proud was its Academy of Sciences, founded in 1918, and well equipped in most respects. The edifice was situated in Kieff, the ancient capital, for the possession of which a sanguinary campaign was being carried on just then, and in the march of events it came to pass that General Denikin stormed and took the city. The soldiery, as is their wont in such cases, turned the fine building into barracks and heated the premises with the documents of the archives. Many similar calamities happened to other educational establishments situated in the theater of hostilities, and the outlook of the cultural campaign seemed hopeless.

Those hindrances and setbacks would have been enough to deter any ordinary reformers, but the Soviets, ignoring alike apprehension, doubt, and caution, presented an indomitable will power to one and all of them and forged ahead. The unavoidable breakdowns undergone in the course of their experience by those enthusiastic light-dispensers will assuredly challenge the sympathies of the humane onlooker, unless he belongs to that group of thinkers who hold that already there is too much teaching and preaching in the world for the happiness of mankind. As a matter of fact, the happiest groups and individuals in Sovietdom and elsewhere are also culturally the most backward. Some populations are still so far behind that the Bolshevik teacher hardly knows whether to laugh or to weep over the fantastical things he daily sees and hears. A mean trick played upon the Mordva is at once characteristic and depressing. The various branches of this interesting people scattered over Moscow, Nishny Novgorod, Penza, etc.—fragments of a once widespread ethnological branch—are in consequence of their primitive notions mor-

bidly solicitous about the next life and what it will bring them, seeing that their stay there is to be everlasting. Many heartless, impecunious Russians, aware of this preoccupation, lure them into purchasing comfortable seats in heaven and paying stiff prices for them on the ground that they are the very last vacant, and therefore inestimable bargains. And the Mordva sell their last earthly possessions in order to secure those easy armchairs in the world to come. This instance is quoted only as a rough measure of the difficulties which the Soviet pedagogues have to confront. To those who feel disposed to point to the gullibility of the Mordva in disparagement of the work already achieved, one might submit the fact that in countries that rank as the most cultured to-day the sale of seats in heaven is also a pious and costly custom. The following incident, serviceable as a point of comparison, is also perhaps worth narrating.

In a certain village before the close of the school term, as Christmas of the year 1928 was drawing near, the head inspector arrived for the purpose of conducting the half-yearly examinations. The subject was geography. The official visitor, pointing to the globe, asks to be shown the various parts of the earth. Then turning with scrutinizing glance to the agitated scholar he inquires why the globe is dented at both ends, north pole and south pole. The boy, visibly frightened, answers with tears in his throat that he really cannot help it, it was not he that did it; in fact it had always been like that. The inspector turns his keen glance on the teacher who, promptly coming to the help of his favorite pupil, discourses glibly: "I assure you, Mr. Chief Inspector, the boy is speaking the truth, as he has been taught to do: the school did receive the globe just as you see it, dented in both places. In fact——" The chief inspector, furious, quits the room, bangs the door, rushes

off to the director, and excitedly narrates what the scholar and his master have just been saying. The director, painfully anxious to arrange things amicably, but scrupulously adhering to fact, exclaims: "Yes, yes, Mr. Chief Inspector, it is exactly as he says. Believe me, I can well call to mind all the circumstances, and I gave instructions at the time that nothing more should be ordered of the Jew. . . ."

This story, bruited abroad, caused quite a sensation. After a while it found its way to the offices of the Ministry of Public Instruction, and ultimately reached the ears of a zealous deputy who availed himself of the reassembling of Parliament to recount it to a group of his colleagues in the lobby. A loud burst of laughter was his reward. Only one of his hearers, a peasant deputy, remained unmoved and stern. Shaking his head, he indignantly asked: "Well, where's the joke? I don't see anything funny in the story. Of course nothing should be bought of the Jew. . . ."

This characteristic episode occurred not in Sovietdom but in Hungary at the close of the year 1928.[1] Evidently it takes ages to civilize an entire people, and nowhere has the work been completed as yet.

Education in the progressive Soviet Republics begins quite early, in accordance with the precepts of latter-day theorists: before the school comes the kindergarten or the day nursery. In the Czardom this need had also engaged attention and evoked well-meaning efforts on the part of the government; but no sooner had the war and its profiteers made their ruinous demands on the State coffers than the two hundred and fifty existing pre-school organizations were bereft of their slender revenue and left to perish. No further grants in aid were made by the State for their maintenance. After the Revolution it fell to the Soviet government to create anew and uphold these and similar

[1] *Berliner Tageblatt*, February 10, 1929.

establishments, and it decided to treat their functions as an integral part of the educational curriculum. At present the most popular form assumed by those institutions is that of day nurseries where the children of workers are kept and looked after by competent pedagogues during the seven or eight hours of their mothers' enforced absence. The club children's room is a kindred creation, a sort of kindergarten where the bairns may let their curiosity run wild and are taught by trained experts to observe, question, and judge, while the mothers are away lecturing, working, or qualifying for a career. Spacious, airy playgrounds and playrooms for pre-school children under trained supervision sprang up everywhere as by enchantment, supplying a widely felt need, and spreading over the entire Russian Republic but not beyond. In the year 1926 the number of these spaces was computed at three thousand. In the year 1928 it had risen to six thousand, and so the institutions are distributed over the land. The circumstance that they are situate hard by the working places of the mothers, who have free access to their little ones, was hailed with joy by the women who had to toil and moil for seven hours before they could think of self-culture, even in its rudimentary forms.

Various modifications of the two institutions already alluded to and constant tentative innovations in training methods attest the earnestness of the State pedagogues and their resourcefulness. For example, coöperation is the pet system of Sovietism, the key to the solution of some of its puzzling problems, and in this issue, as in all others, it plays an important part, under the name of the Housing Co-operatives. The object of this body at the outset was to provide cheap summer playgrounds where children might enjoy a large measure of freedom, absorb elementary knowledge without effort, and acquire physical health and

strength. The rôles of the three contributing factors are as follows: The Coöperative is responsible for housing and heating, the parents purvey the food, and the State fees the staff.[1] So satisfactorily has this simple innovation worked that it is now no longer a mere summer expedient, but is being turned into a permanent institution, the staffs of which have instructions to coöperate as closely as may be with the families of the little ones, and to communicate to the mothers information about the rearing of children and the application to them of hygienic methods. This close alliance betwen the Board and the family marks a fresh departure, and is fraught with excellent educational results. It brings mothers into contact with the physician, the teacher, and the nurses, from whom they learn all that it behooves them to know. The radio is employed to stamp these lessons on their memory, and hundreds of thousands of booklets have been published and distributed broadcast for their benefit. These publications, it is affirmed, are read with eagerness and profit.

The Soviets glory in experiments and innovations, however tentative, if they are at all likely to lead to useful discoveries, for they pride themselves on their rôle of the great central luminary whence knowledge is radiated and diffused. And in this mode of research they have undoubtedly made some felicitous hits. The list of inventions and discoveries to the credit of their scientific workers, who, however, are not all proletarians, is impressive. The proletariat laying down its tools in order to give a fillip to science is an inspiriting picture which sometimes reconciles the Marxist leaders to the presence among Soviet workers of timid, repentant ex-monarchists and self-effacing ex-capitalists, and on the whole in this adventurous research

[1]The State pays as much as 77 per cent. of the expenses of about one third of these organizations.

they have turned thought and activities into new and fruitful channels. It must, however, be borne in mind that what has been said on the subject of these new organizations refers exclusively to the Russian Republic, and also that parents whose children are allowed to profit by those institutions almost all belong to the privileged class of proletarians. As for the backward States of the Union—the Votyaki, the Kalmuks, the Hakassy, etc.—they present a variety of special problems which call for, and receive, exceptional measures. For example, every one of them has to be approached by a staff whose members are proficient in the language of the people, and are capable of attacking the absurd quasi-religious prejudices without wounding the self-respect of the masses. Among the queer notions which are ingrained in many of those tribes is the belief that the washing of children constitutes a grave danger and must therefore be eschewed at all costs. And they avoid it with scrupulous rigor. To cut boys' hair and to let them remove their caps are also acts abounding in peril. But patience and tact have wrought perceptible improvement in some of the national Republics where two hundred native pedagogues lectured persuasively to groups and individuals on the upbringing of children, and then composed and published attractive booklets on the same subject in the idioms of the people. Furthermore some five hundred students have been successfully prepared and qualified in Moscow and the capitals of the Republics under consideration for the purpose of founding and organizing pre-school establishments there. For the behoof of fourteen of those backward nationalities sixty-three day nurseries are already in action.

A child's career begins early in the Union. The procedure is somewhat as follows: Imagine a child of eight summers —bright, healthy, sensible. Its parents, if known, must be

immaculate from the Communistic viewpoint, that is to say, untainted by kinship with capitalists, monarchists, and suchlike evil-minded men, otherwise the child cannot escape condign punishment nor hope for a good education or a congenial career. This is the Soviet adaptation of the doctrine of original sin. If the child's progenitors are spotless and the other conditions satisfactory, then the boy or girl may be asked whether he or she had a longing to be a Communist. If the answer given be in the affirmative, the child chooses a group, is taken over by the authorities, enlisted in a party circle, and becomes the recipient of important prerogatives that go with the high distinction in store for it and are certain to be increased as time lapses. If later on it is discovered that the data presented about the parents were false, the children are turned out of the school without hope of readmission. The most promising of those lucky boys and girls are afterward admitted to the League of Pioneers, and are brought up to play a special part in propaganda work; others become ordinary members of variously named Communistic groups and as such are entitled to the benefits of a systematic education from which less fortunate children born with the stain of original sin are debarred. Lack of schools could of course also be pleaded, together with insufficiency of funds and teachers, as grounds for this exclusiveness, if the Soviets sought for excuses. But their custom is to avow their practices without gloss or varnish. *Honi soit qui mal y pense.*

This division of the population into goats and sheep, the origin of which has been sketched in the foregoing chapter, is inflexibly maintained in every walk of life and at every age. It has become a mark of the new dispensation. In Sovietdom, as in the Christian Church, infants have to bear the weight of the sins, original and voluntary, of their fathers, and nothing that they can do will avail to wash them

away. The offspring of Czarist officers, of monarchists, of those who employed labor of any kind, of people who live without working, are systematically kept out of good schools and deprived of much else that is desirable; while tiny Marxists, the children of Red army and navy men, are welcomed to the fold, encouraged, aided, trained, and advanced. The view taken in high quarters of the non-Bolshevist section of the population is that it may be tolerated up to a certain point but not beyond, and must in no case be allowed to share the good things destined for the children of light. Such was the view which was taken of the Canaanites by the Hebrews under Moses and Joshua; it is the attitude of the chosen people toward a generation of vipers fleeing from the wrath to come. Bolshevism unsheathed its sword and threw away the scabbard. One can understand, without in any way palliating, the motives of this attitude when one realizes the feelings of the Bolshevists toward the men of the ancient régime and opponents of the Revolution. One may get a notion of it from the grave statement recently made by Baumann, one of the weighty spokesmen of the Soviets:

> In our vast land there is not a single district free from treason and attacks by koolaks against collective organisms and those who work them.[1]

A fixed idea of this nature is bound to engender unwonted consequences.

When food is scarce, it is sold by the State Coöperative only to orthodox Marxists, who for this purpose are provided with bread cards, the others being forced to dispense with cards and to forage for themselves as best they can. When the elections begin the "goats" have no vote, whereas the "sheep" are esteemed electors.

[1] *Pravda*, April 16, 1929.

The lowest age at which bairns in the Union join the Communist party is about eight years. Some few children whose parents are ardent supporters of the government, or official aspirants to admission to the party are, as we saw, enlisted at their own desire. The assent of the parents is deemed superfluous. The brightest of these weanlings, if they are physically strong and display a talent and liking for biology, are sent to a special establishment in Moscow, which is one of the most remarkable institutions for the young in all the Union, perhaps even in the world. It may be described as a lay seminary in which the pupils are thoroughly grounded in the principles of that favorite science of the Soviets—biology—including physiological embryology and the physiology of organisms. Here they are systematically initiated into the interesting problems already solved by scholars and those which still await a solution, and they are put upon their mettle to contribute in time to throw light on the latter. To each pupil is allotted his or her collection of animals, instruments, and other requirements, and a place in the laboratory for experiment and research. The teachers, none of whom I know personally, are said to be highly qualified and enthusiastic, and the course is certainly thorough. In this college the scholars lay in a fund of scientific information which would astonish many an Old World professor. This, perhaps, is one of the boldest pedagogical experiments recorded since the death of Pestalozzi, and its achievements do not seem to belie the expectations of its initiators. Biology is the science toward which the Soviets feel irresistibly drawn. They take an unspeakable delight in spreading it as an antidote against religion. And rumor has it that they are making headway. The groundwork of the family or its substitute in Sovietdom is no longer as hitherto the legal recognition of a social community but is constituted

by biological relations. Hostility to all forms of religion is one of the sentiments most carefully fostered among the pupils of these and all other State schools. The sense of the unseen is atrophied. Children may not live by faith, despite the Moslem proverb: "If you believe but in a stone, it will do you good." They are trained to observe, to analyze, combine phenomena, draw conclusions from them, and generally to feel a certain degree of responsibility for their own surroundings.

To return to the schooling of the little ones who have not been admitted to the Biological Seminary. In several of the Moscow, Leningrad, Crimean, and other districts 100 per cent. of the children pass through elementary establishments, where they are kept for four years picking up notions on various subjects, but this occurs only in the most advanced Republics of Sovietdom. In the backward States, especially in those of the East, where the sun of learning has stood still for ages, the percentage of children who pass through the educational mill is as low as twenty-six. The influence of the Central government in applying a remedy to this state of affairs is doubtless considerable but by no means decisive. It should be borne in mind that each Republic still enjoys a degree of sovereignty which enables it to keep its citizens, or quite a large percentage of them, out of the schools. But drastic measures are in contemplation for dealing in the near future with the unsatisfactory condition of these embryonic Marxists. In this connection I learned that in the year 1932 elementary instruction will be made obligatory throughout all the Soviet Republics. This, however, is still an experiment *in petto*. High hopes are often disappointed. In the first heat of revolutionary enthusiasm, for example, more than four thousand elementary schools were improvised, organized, and inaugurated with pride and solem-

nity, but very soon it was borne in upon the buoyant culture bearers that neither the means of paying the staff nor indeed sufficient numbers of qualified teachers were available! And when the coat was recut according to the cloth in hand, intermediate education had to limit its operations to a little less than half the original number of educational establishments.

Before the Revolution there were fewer elementary schools for children from eight to twelve years. True, the increase effected by the Soviets amounts to no more than twelve thousand odd. But whereas in all the Czarist establishments together the number of scholars in receipt of instruction was only a little more than seven millions, at present it reaches ten and a half millions.

What education essentially was under the Czarist dispensation has been long since forgotten. I, who was one of the professional educators, had some experience of it, and this is how I described it in the year 1890:

"No one interested in the welfare of our young generation—and who that loves his country is not so interested?—can look without a feeling of profound melancholy upon its appalling moral condition," exclaims a Russian publicist. "And worst of all, it is impossible to foresee the end of this miserable state of things or to hope for a speedy change for the better."[1] Who is it to come from? The parents? The family? "It is certain," we are assured by a writer in the *Novoye Vremya,* "that the majority of families to whom higher education is accessible have not the dimmest notion what education is."[2] Another writer, who treats this subject in a government organ, affirms that those families in which the children are morally and irremediably wrecked by the criminal conduct of the parents are to be counted by "hundreds of thousands."[3] There is very little, then, to be expected from home influences. We have seen the tendency of the schools.

[1]Cf. *Graschdanin,* April 3, 1889.

[2]*Novoye Vremya,* September 22, 1889.

[3]*Graschdanin,* April 3, 1889, in an article entitled "The Modern Family."

It only remains to be noted that most of the acts of the [Czarist] government in connection with education, whatever their real objects, have tended to demoralize the young generation. During the past few years, for instance, the personnel of most of the gymnasiums and high schools has been changed, and "weeded" of men of science and principle who were suspected of harboring Liberal notions. Their places have been taken by individuals who endeavor to substitute for the intellectual and moral qualities of their predecessors an immoderate zeal for autocracy. The nature of the influence of the new men upon the striplings confided to their care may be imagined from the value they set upon good example. The following sketch is taken from a government organ, and cannot, therefore, be suspected of exaggeration. In the district of Starobelsk, "the educators of youth walk about in broad daylight in the public places with their mistresses on their arms although provided with lawful wives. And this in presence of their pupils. *We are nowise surprised that society should look with friendly eyes upon such doings:* but it is surely unseemly that the director of the gymnasium and the parents of the children should show themselves so thoroughly indifferent to the public profligacy of those trainers of the young."

Thus long before the youth is ushered into the world to fight his own way, his soul is swept and garnished by parents and pedagogues and made ready for the reception of a legion of unclean devils. This accounts for the remarkable precocity in vice, characteristic of too many Russian children, to which, so far as I am aware, no European country supplies a parallel. Thus criminal liaisons are often contracted between school-children at an age when German boys and girls are still firm believers in the Klapperstorch theory of the perpetuation of the human race, and English youths and maidens too much absorbed by marbles, tops, dolls, hoops, croquet, and tennis to need any theories, mythical or physiological, on the question. When, therefore, we read of the trial of a schoolboy of sixteen for cleaving another child's skull "over a love affair," "inflicting wounds which the physician described as incurable," we are no more surprised at the origin of the assault than at the outcome of the trial. The prisoner having been found guilty of wounding with intent to inflict grievous bodily harm, and of having disabled his victim for life, the Court thoughtfully adjourned the case for a fortnight, to give him time to accept or reject the terms offered by the prosecutor—a full pardon

and legal impunity in consideration of a payment of twenty-five roubles (about £2 10s.).[1]

The Soviet authorities bestow especial care on professional institutions which they have duly distributed throughout the land with gratifying results. Comparing the Czarist professional establishments with those of today, the Soviets point with self-satisfaction to double the number of schools and treble the number of scholars. In the year 1932 these institutions "of the type sketched by Marx" will be opened in every part of the Republic where the population is sufficiently dense.

Another thorny problem, that of kneading the mooshik and shaping him to the form desired by the Soviets, is being approached in a great variety of ways that do credit at once to the ingenuity and the optimism of the Sovietist culture bearers. A judgment on the adequacy of the system, however, cannot be improvised. There are more than five hundred schools devoted exclusively to the teaching and training of the peasants in everything appertaining to agriculture, the object being that, when duly qualified, the graduates may form the nucleus of a vast brotherhood of Marxist husbandmen, each one expert in his own special branch and all animated by the spirit of Marx and of Lenin. In this way it is hoped that the enormous demand for qualified tillers of the soil who are also convinced collectivists may find adequate response. I visited one of the far-famed Peasants' Houses, that of Moscow, examined all that was being done there for the rural populations, and was truly amazed at what I beheld. Everything he wants to know about agriculture—the latest machines, where they are manufactured, what they cost, how they can be

[1] *Graschdanin*, September 16, 1889. These extracts are taken from my book *Russian Characteristics* (E. B. Lanin).

purchased—the farmer can learn in a twinkling. What seeds are the best for his land, why they are better than all others, where they are to be had, and the prices—all this will be communicated to him while he waits. Every phase of the linen and wool industry, of fruit growing, of cattle breeding, etc., is, as I mentioned in a previous chapter, taught gratis in that wonderful palace of plain men and women. If he is in trouble with his fellow villagers he has only to state his case to a lawyer on the premises, and he is at once told what the law enacts, how it affects him in his dispute, and what course he ought to pursue. All this costs him nothing. I wandered for hours about the museum attached to the Peasants' House, and I was enchanted by what I saw, without forgetting for a single moment that it was an exhibition, and therefore created in order to overshadow the best kindred pedagogical establishments of Czarist times and of foreign lands. A club, a theater, a moving-picture show, a radio, a library, reading rooms, a restaurant, lawyers' consulting rooms, expert agriculturists' offices, dormitories, wash houses, and a vast museum, are among its attractions.

The model Marxist schools described above are held to have already justified the pains and the money expended on them by the farsighted Sovietist authorities. I met two peasants who glibly answered my questions about those Communist seminaries, and judging by what they said, and how they said it, I feel disposed to infer that that portion of the training which has to do with handicrafts is uncommonly well done; the peasants there are also taught to observe, compare, reason, to read, criticize, and work well. But although thoroughly indoctrinated with Communistic principles, one may well doubt whether when Marxist ideas come to clash with material interests, as so often happens since the abrogation of the new economic policy, the

former will win the day. Men are men, and their wives are passionate lovers of the beautiful in raiment and of the comfortable in living, and neither the will nor the mind of the husbandman seems to take kindly to the self-denying aspect of Communism.

Before the revolutionary system of education could be organized an immense amount of destructive and constructive work was, as we have seen, necessary in order to alter the old conditions and readjust schools, teachers, scholars, programs, textbooks, to the new orientation.

Especially difficult was the task of organizing higher education in country districts. I am assured that it has been done, and I know that the Republic is well supplied with high schools and universities. Universities! In the days of my youth the number of universities in the Czardom, exclusive of technical high schools, was about a dozen and a half, and they were modeled on those of Germany. As time lapsed and the Romanoff dynasty was drawing to its tragic end, the universities and the high schools together totaled eighty-nine. The Soviets have beaten this record, for, if I am not mistaken, they have raised the number to one hundred and thirty. It is worth noting, however, that the type of university in vogue to-day is Marxist and, therefore, wholly new, so new indeed, and with a program so different from the old one, that the name university may well seem a misnomer. Another difference consists in the social position of the students. Under the Czar they were drawn from all the classes and masses in the Empire: there were sons of shopkeepers, of lawyers, of engineers, nobles, priests, peasants, etc.—all of whom had passed through some intermediate educational mill such as a gymnasium, a lyceum, a seminary—in a word, they were "intellectuals" perpetually seeking for the Unknown, whereas at present seventy per cent. of the students are sons of

peasants and workingmen who have entered the universities almost straight from the plow and the workshop. One of the names given officially to these institutions which differ radically from the pre-revolutionary universities is "Workmen's Faculties." The course of study there lasts four years, the object being to impart to the graduates as complete a knowledge of the groundwork of the natural sciences as is possible under present hard conditions, one of which is the sheer impecuniosity of the majority of students, and the consequent need of government subsidies in order to enable them to keep body and soul together while they are being taught. Of these institutions, which are a new creation of the Soviets and are marked by strong political bias, I have no direct knowledge, but I take it that they are preparatory seminaries rather than universities, and that the need of them was felt by the Soviets in their struggle for the triumph of Marxism. Consequently they can hardly be compared with European universities which, with few exceptions, have nothing to do with politics of the day. Doubtless the demands of the young generation in Russia at present are wholly different from those of pre-war times. I understand that the number of students in the one hundred and thirty Faculties totals almost one hundred and sixty thousand, the great majority of whom are genuine proletarians free from any vestige of kinship with the upper classes, biological, social, or cultural.

These results obtained in a brief span of time, and in the face of well-nigh prohibitive difficulties, are certainly striking and testify to a degree of zeal, enthusiasm, and will power on the part of the revolutionary leaders which is to be found only in times of religious ferment and self-abnegation.

If one compares the cultural state of Russia when the October Revolution overthrew the provisional government

with the relatively flourishing condition to which it has been raised since then by the fostering care of the Soviets, one cannot but admire the ingenuity with which they made the most of their meager materials, improved the quality of their instruments, often the reverse of apt, and accommodated their methods to the idiosyncrasies of the peoples under their charge. Nor will it be gainsaid that the recorded achievements constitute a technical triumph in the cultural domain which the most forward nations might well envy. Again, what these men have done toward the support of their system, which one may accept or reject, bespeaks a type of public worker not often met with elsewhere—a worker who pursues aims which he assumes to be the best adapted to public well-being, neglecting or sacrificing his own personal interests for their attainment and boldly facing the obstacles, with which he continues to wrestle until he has overcome them. This, of course, is an exceptionally favorable case.

Thus by leaps and bounds the cultural situation improved in the three Republics which are classified as progressive, and the Soviets on their part traveled far afield ransacking ancient history and modern science, the theaters and the film shows, in search of ever new devices to make reading and writing easy and to excite the thirst of knowledge in the minds of the chosen people. To the chosen people and to them alone. For it must always be remembered that only Communists, Coöperatists, proletarian workers, and army and navy men and their children are allowed to partake of the boon of the best education. All others are rigorously excluded, and not only from the schools and seminaries, but also from the Red army and navy, from the civil service, from the electorate, from the rural councils, and from posts in any branch of public service. They are lost beyond redemption, they and theirs.

Sometimes their filiation becomes known after the children have spent a year or more as favorite or promising pupils, and then the sudden expulsion from the sacred precincts whence the Elysian Fields were visible is extremely painful and shameful. But the authorities are inexorable. One day the query was officially laid before the Soviet authorities: "Must a child then suffer because its father or grandfather was a general or a landlord, or an employer of labor?" "Yes, most certainly. And the sentence cannot be quashed or mollified in any way by reason of the child's so-called deserts." The winnowing commission scours the land unceasingly, seeking out tares and separating them from the wheat, making blunders and sometimes repairing them. In Azerbeidjan fifteen students were thus excluded, and then reinstated in their good name.

One day a girl named Sutyaghina, who was a Communist invested with an electoral vote and occupying a post, was deprived of her membership of the Communist party and dismissed from her situation because it had been ascertained that her father was a rural officer under the Czar. "But why," asked the girl, "must I be made responsible for the sins of my father? Am I an enemy of the Soviet rulers, I, who rush to partake, body and soul, of the new hope they have opened out to us? What are my father and mother to me now that I have new intimate relatives—the October Revolution and Socialism? Why have I been deprived of what was my life?" Such was the wording of the girl's petition or expostulation. But it was disregarded. One of the more zealous revolutionaries, in a letter to one of the newspapers, wrote:

> If everything you allege be true, Sutyaghina, you still require three hundred years of honorable useful services to atone for your Cain of a father. Let those who gave birth to Socialism and Octobrism rule them, but if the children of popes and rural policemen be allowed

to worm themselves into our ranks we shall be hard put to it to rid ourselves of them.

"You speak several languages, and I believe write them. Why don't you teach them and make a little money?" I asked a beggar who accosted me first in one idiom and then in another, and finally described to me his life history in a sequence of brief, clever antitheses and aphorisms. "I dare not make for such a goal. It would be my undoing. My father was an Orthodox priest, and this filiation has left a blot in my antecedents which nothing can wash away. If I were to give my body to be burned, that stain would still attach to my ashes or tarnish my memory. I only want to linger on a few years more in the sunshine and brightness of the world. I have some pleasant remembrances of the early part of my existence, I also have high hopes of the life to come, and my ambition is to make the best of these. To do this I must live, but there is no place for me in the new order of things. Now I ask you as a fair-minded foreigner: Am I worse than Lenin or Chicherin or a number of other bigwigs? They, too, were sons of burshui.[1] Why should they be saints and the likes of me sinners? Imagine for a moment that Chicherin were here in disguise, and had taken another name, what do you suppose they would do to him?"

The winnowing commissions in their revisions and inquiries disclose amusing aberrations that horrify the sensitive and amuse the philosophical Communists. In Vyshnevolotzk, for instance, it transpired that one of the members of the electorate there was a woman worker who on inquiry turned out to be Princess Putyatina. A genuine princess! From the high schools of Leningrad more than a hundred young men were expelled when it was proved

[1]The Russian form of the word "bourgeois."

that they were sons of former landowners, rural policemen, shopkeepers, etc., who had stepped into the universities disguised as working men and sometimes provided with letters of recommendation from the directors of other schools. In the villages of Kalino and Kopalno (Perm district) the circle that directed everything and everybody was composed of forty-two ex-traders, eight members of the inquisitorial committee of Admiral Kolchak, and ex-shipowners. Some of these amusing revelations remind one of the legend of the election of a devil to the papal throne and of the worries and troubles that beset him there and almost drove him mad.

In spite of these intrusions the Soviet schools of all categories are flourishing. Thus in the year 1927 an additional six hundred thousand children passed through the elementary schools in the Union and five hundred thousand more were enrolled in November of the same year. Expenditure per head on education in the Russian Republic increased by 8.5 per cent. in that same year while the government spent 47 per cent. more on school buildings. For in the country a vast stream of children kept flowing to the schools soliciting admission: to be precise, double the number already accommodated, so that the authorities were at their wit's end to provide room and tuition for the newcomers. At the workmen's universities the attendance from the year 1927, when it amounted to 5,380, rose to 15,677, and in schools and adult courses from 102,940 to 133,829. Altogether more than 1,300,000 adult illiterates were initiated into the rudiments of education. During the same year the percentage of student workers in the higher schools was 34.6, and in the ensuing twelve months it had grown to 43.2, while the percentage for peasants and their offspring was 24.4 for 1927 and 25.6 for 1928. In the elemen-

tary schools the percentage was very much lower, 4.3 in 1927 and 14.7 in 1928, but the workers never lost heart.[1]

Expenditure under the State and local budgets for universal education was, in 1926–1927, 695,300,000 roubles. In the ensuing financial year it had risen to 845,300,741, and in the following twelvemonth it was in round numbers 1,000,000,000 roubles, a noteworthy achievement, but still far from sufficient. Government organs maintain that the rate of State expenditure for each school is still much too low. In the progressive Republic of Ukraine it is only 30 roubles a head and 20 roubles in White Russia.[2] In the first group of the secondary school the number of scholars has waxed considerably, from 1,300,000 in all the Republics in the year 1926–1927 to 1,600,000 in the following twelvemonth, and in the year 1928–1929 I am told that it reached a total of 1,760,000 scholars.

The salaries of elementary school teachers were utterly insufficient, to my thinking; but then a foreigner's views do not afford the criterion by which such matters are or should be measured. Still, Soviet authorities must have come to the same conclusion as I did, for I found that they soon raised the pay of elementary school teachers by 17.1 per cent., and those of the higher institutions by 29.7 per cent., and ordered an addition of 27 per cent. to the salaries of professors. Since then the Central government further decided to allot better pensions to retiring teachers and generally to make as satisfactory arrangements as possible for all classes of pedagogues who have run their course. In the Soviet Union childhood is the seed-time; in youth and manhood action is due. A worker in the Union retires earlier

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[1]See the excellent bulletin *Voks*, edited by Madame Kameneva, who is said to be one of the most indefatigable and successful workers in the cultural field, 1928, 50-1, p. 13.

[2]Cf. bulletin *Voks*, 1928, 46-7, p. 11.

than in most countries. If he has a post and is giving satisfaction he may retain his situation after the age of forty-five, but if he is not a Communist and is out of work the Labor Exchange will not enter his name for any occupation once he has attained the age of forty-five. This is a rule which has caused bad blood among the numerous classes of the shelved men and women.

The Sovietist professors are themselves liable to be tested periodically as to their fitness, and if their powers are perceptibly on the wane they are withdrawn from their posts. There is nothing fixed and immutable in Sovietdom. Everything is in flux. Everyone must justify his existence and his position. In the spring of 1929 more than two thousand professors had to lay down their occupations and submit to reëlection; all those professors who had served ten years and teachers of intermediate schools seven years, and professors who had reached the age of sixty-five. The reëlection is no mere formality. All Sovietists are expected to take part in it, and the proceedings are conducted by the Academy of Sciences. In the Soviet realm there is no spot where the weary are at rest. Activity and the tug-of-war are every man's lot. The Communist levies are frequently being thinned, and large numbers of those who imagined themselves cannonized fixtures are expelled for all time. The ranks of the Communists are like the waves of the sea, that appear to be ever the same but are continuously renewed.

Those and other details into which it is impossible here to enter do credit to the Soviet authorities, to their single-mindedness and public spirit. One cannot, however, forget that the mistakes they made especially at the outset were numerous, and sometimes sinister, but perhaps unavoidable, considering that one of their essential principles is the harnessing to Marxism of every art, craft, science, and technical proficiency, known or imagined. Marxism is for them

the key to all the sciences and disciplines. The "proletarianization" of science was a consequence of that general principle, and the exertions put forth to realize it served but to show that it was a wild goose chase. One representative and champion of Bolshevism dealing with this matter writes: "The science of to-morrow is confronted with the problem of the practical and deliberate service it is to render to society. . . . Physics, chemistry, and mathematics must be forced to take advantage of all those theories and laws for the integral solution of this problem."[1] And one of the most authoritative dignitaries in Sovietdom, Lunacharsky, affirmed that "Mandarins of the bourgeoisie have taken possession of science. It behooves us on our side," he went on to say, "to possess ourselves of bourgeois science. It is our duty to make it proletarian. In lieu of professors and scholars soaked through and through in the spirit of detachment from politics with their bourgeois outlook on life, we should invite genuine proletarian men of learning capable of creating a science of our own, a science obedient to us."[2] Such were the notions that prevailed at first respecting the profit that might be extracted from science for Marxism and the proletarian. "A science of our own" exists in Catholic universities in which none but Catholic doctrines are permitted to be taught and none but Catholic teachers are allowed to expound them. "A science of our own" is also a privilege enjoyed by Harvard and those other North American universities which profess the saving doctrine of "Fundamentalism." But in strictly scientific institutions "a science of our own" is placidly ignored.

It took a certain time and cost many precious lives before the Soviet authorities began to deal with "bourgeois" men

[1]Cf. publication by A. Bogdanoff and A. Smith, *Proletarian Culture*, N. 11-12, cited in the Universal Library by Boris Sokoloff (*Science in Sovietist Russia*, p. 10).

[2]B. Sokoloff, *Science in Sovietist Russia*, p. 10.

of science as with people who did not deserve contumely and starvation. . . . And in the interval they continued to look upon them askant as advocates of the bourgeoisie and, therefore, rabid enemies of Bolshevism, which hardly any of them could truly be said to be. Some of my own university comrades and colleagues were, and are now, workers in the ranks of Bolshevists, among them one whom I knew as an unpopular champion of the extreme section of decadent Czarism. He has since been converted, and lives to-day a man of light and leading in Bolshevist scientific circles. I have also known others. . . . The fact remains that many members of the learned profession classified as parasites and drones were denied such daily rations as were supplied to the working men, soldiers, sailors, etc. Nay, they were almost starved, and numbers of them actually perished. Maxim Gorky took up the cudgels on their behalf and interceded for them with the government in the interests of humanity and the State.

> Scientific workers [he wrote] should be prized as the most productive and precious energy of the nation. The premature death of a learned man is a tremendous loss to the country, and this truth ought to be especially comprehensible to a government of laborers. Glance at a list of the men of science who have died during the past few months. You will then realize how great is the falling off of scientific potency in our land. If this process of extinction goes on at the same rate as now, our country may be wholly bereft of its brains. . . . Genuine science is of no party.[1]

Other voices were heard in the same sense and were reinforced by the logic of the facts which were becoming more and more widely known. Men of science had no allowance of fuel such as was given to other categories of citizens, their laboratories had to be closed down, their valuable col-

[1] In an article entitled "What Is Science?" which was published in the Petrograd journal, *Science and Its Workers*, N. 1.

lections—the work of many years—were ruined, and they themselves died of want and exposure. In three years four hundred and twenty scientists succumbed to hunger and cold, according to the official report of the Scientists' Home —a large portion of the "brains of the country."

Here is a fragment of a desultory letter penned by one of those sufferers:

> They brought me my rations, a little bread and fish. I went to the Geographical Institute. There I noticed a venerable old Professor S. who was coming towards me. I went over to him in order to inquire about the days and hours of my lectures. I held in my hand a crust of bread and was munching morsels of it. I could not make out why the professor faltered and hesitated as though he wanted to put a question to me but was unable to summon up courage enough for the purpose. "Listen," he said at length. "Give me a little bread. This is absurd on my part, but the truth is I am hungry. And when I get food myself I will give it you back."[1]

Or take this extract from a pathetic missive penned by another professor, who was imprisoned for a time seemingly without rhyme or reason:

> It is not only my incarceration in Butyrasky jail that weighs me down. True, I am here for nothing at all and my position is preposterous. But herein lies the peculiar "justice of life." Neither can I say that my heart-sinking is caused by the predicament of the poor old woman, my wife, who is now forced to trudge about the streets —even this is not the chief source of my blank despondency. But when I remember that my investigations of Plague Bacilli which I carried on persistently for the last ten years—that that work has perished, that the culture of the bacteria has been destroyed—I lose heart.[2]

"Please don't touch my circles," cries Archimedes to the soldiers who, unaware whom they have captured, are sum-

[1] B. Sokoloff, *Science in Sovietist Russia*, pp. 15–16.

[2] Cf. B. Sokoloff, *Science in Sovietist Russia*, p. 14.

marily putting the great philosopher and mathematician to death. The "justice of life" is what the imprisoned Russian philosopher was pleased to call these quirks and freaks of Fate.

Those were, indeed, dismal days for the learned drones and parasites, as they were termed. But they came to an end in February, 1920, when the government, aroused by Gorky's writings and realizing the situation, improvised ways and means of saving the lives of those who had survived the ordeal. A commission was got together for the "Betterment of the condition of scientists," and special rations were distributed to them without distinctions based on their political creeds. A new institution known as the Scientists' Home was inaugurated in a grand-ducal palace on one of the banks of the Neva in which they might meet, discuss their various studies, test new discoveries, draft programs, etc. And here they began to breathe freely and work hopefully. At first 1,500 of them were admitted, and afterward the number was raised to 2,000. The ill-starred men revived and recovered their spirits. Pensions for scientific workers and their families were established in the year 1928 on a basis to which no reasonable exception, it is affirmed, can be taken. In continuation of this same prudent policy of encouraging the literary and scientific section of the nation to develop its inherited gifts, a law was promulgated in October, 1928, of considerable interest to writers and men of science, inasmuch as it confers on them the same rights as those enjoyed by labor. Theretofore individuals of the the liberal professions were not possessed of all the privileges which were accorded to employed workers. For instance, laborers are paid first in full before any other claims are taken into consideration, but until the promulgation of the law referred to this did not apply to authors. Formerly when a publisher went into bankruptcy all his

workers were paid off, and the authors ranked only with the private claimants and had to be satisfied with whatever percentage was accorded them together with these. Now this has been changed for the better, and authors and artists have equal rights with the salaried employees. As old acquaintances and colleagues of mine are still to be found in all categories of the learned, I followed the evolutionary and revolutionary changes they underwent with the interest of a psychologist, but without presuming to criticize the motives or condemn the behavior of any of them.

A redeeming feature in all the lamentable tragedies through which the country has passed since 1917 was the withering denunciations of abuses fearlessly published by friends and members of the Soviets. This freedom to point out errors, to call responsible officials to account, and to appeal for redress to those who wield the power to accord it, is one of the surest safeguards of Sovietism. And it runs through the entire system—army, navy, education, press, etc. Even Dives in hell was given a chance to plead his cause and solicit a palliative. Why refuse a similar right to those who, whatever their political peccadilloes, contributed to raise the intellectual level of the nation? But the Soviets go much farther: they accustom children, boys and girls, and adults to test everything and hold up weak points to the light. True, in applying this principle there is always the risk of drawing too near the central light and singeing one's wings. But a mere risk should not deter one. It is part and parcel of the "justice of life" and must be reckoned with.

The new generation acts unconsciously on St. Paul's advice: "Prove all things: hold fast that which is good." They welcome and fructify suggestions from all quarters and especially from the categories and groups on whose behalf they are legislating. That is the golden rule they observe

in all their undertakings. Thus to theatergoers they say: "This theater is endeavoring to entertain you. Help the directors, and tell them how you enjoy the plays they provide, what faults you find with them, and what scenic representations you like best." In this way the audience and artists get to understand each other, and the outcome is satisfactory to both. How art fares is another matter which may be left to look after itself.

I noted that in the elementary schools the children are regularly consulted, and their grounded opinions taken into account. Certain municipal schools in Barcelona have adopted the same method with good results, and other countries are said to be following the example. A case illustrative of this Soviet custom awakened my curiosity. One day it occurred to some of the ubiquitous lynx-eyed watchmen who keep a sharp lookout for promising pedagogical innovations that it would be a fruitful plan to employ cinematography as an aid to education. A congress was forthwith convoked and the theme duly mooted. The conclusions favored the suggestion but broadened it: if the program included films illustrating scientific processes it must also show others that deal with important social problems. This proviso, it appears, was inserted in deference to the wishes of the public. In Moscow there is a unique institution known as the "Educational Theater"—the rest of Europe has not got that far yet—whose function is to figure out and plan things, and it drew up a list of questions to which the spectators were requested to give written replies. It was from the resulting materials that the viewpoint of frequenters of the moving-picture shows was obtained. The verdict allotted the first place to geographico-ethnological films. This is an interesting choice.

Now in other countries geographical films represent principally picturesque landscapes, moonlight fancies, and such-

like, whereas in the Soviet Union local life, customs, quaint rites, national dress, characteristic festivals, and dances, are what the people are most eager to behold. One such film, having Pamir for its subject and entitled *The Roof of the World,* offers a fascinating picture of the life of the natives and supplies data from which science itself might draw helpful suggestions. For example, it abounds in artistic pictures of the working of the patriarchal system among the various tribes, of the worship of a living deity, and of the very human proclivities of this divine being who leads a gay, sinful existence in Paris. Another film, entitled *Lake Baikal,* unfolds to public view the odd ways of everyday life among the Buryats.[1]

Films devoted to industrial and technical topics came next on the list of favorites, while the third place was assigned to medical subjects in their practical aspects. The first of these moving pictures, bluntly entitled *Abortion,* is said by Soviet experts to have presented quite an acceptable settlement of that thorny problem which for Russia was really already pressing. The film was first produced some five or six years back, but in spite of this, and of its technical defects, which are considerable, it is extremely popular to-day. All the medical films are treated from the practical side, for what people want to know is how to cure themselves when ill. Among numerous titles, the following may be mentioned: *The Mechanism of the Human Brain, The Choice of a Profession, Fatigue and the Methods of Fighting It.* Experts affirm that the judgments of the spectators, finding fault with these last named films as too technical and too prolix, were perfectly correct and do credit to their sense of measure. Natural science as a film subject was voted for only by a handful of people, but what they desired to be shown was the practical use of natural science. Why should

[1]Cf. *Voks,* 1928, 46-7, pp. 12 f.

it be studied? What good can it do for us? One of the few scientific films which have had a fair run is entitled *The Riddle of Life*. It was produced by the author of *Abortion*. It endeavors to explain intelligibly the origin of life on our planet as conceived by men of science, and employs for the purpose quite a number of mechanical accessories such as dolls, life-size photographs, etc., and those who have seen it are enthusiastic in its praise.

Among the most important scientific films recently completed one must reckon *The Mechanism of Normal Birth*, the author of which is G. Pissemski, Professor of Gynæcology. The whole process of birth has been photographed by the slow-motion method. With the aid of the latest technical photographic improvements, of which Russians invariably avail themselves, the condition of the fetus in the womb has been ascertained with the utmost precision and certainty, and the recent Zelgaim theory of the rotatory movement of the fetus in the womb, which was hotly disputed, has been satisfactorily proved.

Another film entitled *Earth and Sky* is well conceived and executed and gives ample pabulum for that speculation and those fantastic imaginings that are so rigorously suppressed in the nursery. A film called *Aviation and Chemistry in the Struggle with Locusts* presented some very clear and striking illustrations of the subject and brought home to the minds of the youthful spectators some of the relations between science and practical husbandry on the one hand, and between government and the governed on the other.

The extent to which radio and other latter-day inventions are employed by Soviet pedagogues and public workers for the instruction or entertainment of children, working men, students, and hospital patients, is not realized abroad. It cannot be, for there is nothing like it anywhere else. To give but one example, which is characteristic. The trades-union bu-

reau determined a couple of years ago to brighten up the tenement houses in the working-class district of Orchovo-Zuyeva near Moscow and make life there more enjoyable. And they had wires laid down for the purpose of installing radio in the flats. The plan, instead of kindling enthusiasm, lacked support, especially when it leaked out that each tenement must pay an installment of fourteen roubles in advance on the deferred system. A few risked their money and were delighted when they found what they were receiving for it: theatrical performances, concerts, meetings, lectures, from Moscow and the provinces. Soon the neighbors felt interested, listened to the radio, and brought in their advance money, and in a brief span of time practically all the flats in this and other districts were wired.

The Meirabpamruss Film Company is known in and out of Russia. It has accomplished much and won for itself a world-wide reputation for full-sized films, and also for new types of films representing scenes from Russian novels, viz., Gorky's novel, *The Mother,* and also scientific subjects, engine structure, propaganda for the metrical system, etc. Vsevolod Pudovkin, who is one of the successful workers in this branch, produced a truly remarkable picture entitled *Human Behavior,* showing on the screen the mechanism of the human brain. Professor Pavlov's celebrated conditional reflex experiments were brought out with a degree of scientific precision which would be amazing were it not known that the work was done under the direction of Professors Voskressensky and Vosikoff. When the film company was reorganized and emerged under the name of Meiralpomfilm with a State subvention, a fire broke out and destroyed the studio, scenery, costumes, etc. But without losing time, lighting apparatus was received from abroad, and the laboratory was soon able to do as good work as before. It is said to be now turning out 300,000

meters a month and releasing some thirty films a year. Among interesting new films are: *The New Village, Nursing the Sick, Your Health, The New Man, Mother and Child, Village Hygiene.*

The Society of the Friends of the Kinema is employing the screen for the education of the masses. It draws these from the clubs, schools, and factories in the towns, and form the reading huts and people's houses in the country, and forms them into nuclei some members of which are afterward qualified to take part in the expeditions which visit the remotest districts of the Union. In a word, it is difficult for foreigners to realize the vastness of the task undertaken by Sovietist film producers, the importance of the part played by this invention, and the excellent results already recorded. A glance at the fatuous and demoralizing films of Europe and the United States will help the ordinary reader to realize the good work now being done in Sovietdom.

Those are among the gratifying experiments from which the Soviets presumably draw inspiration to push onward to the conquest of new worlds. But their claim to lay the balm of contentment to their souls is rudely challenged by one of the principal organs of Sovietism in the capital.[1] This is one of the thousands of examples of the moderating utterances of the newspapers. The press organs are continually on the alert for flaws, mistakes, neglect, lawbreaking, criminal stewardship, and such-like frailties and obliquities.

> The National Committee of Enlightenment [this same periodical writes] is conducting hundreds of thousands of little children to doors that are closed. During their nine years' course they assimilate nothing whatever of what will be wanted by them in the course of their lives.

[1] *Rabotshaya Gazeta*, March 21, 1929.

They merely get dragged up to confront examiners. Those who fail to win admission to the higher establishments sink down to the labor exchanges as unskilled workmen.

It is further asserted that of the three and a half million scholars who pass through the doors of those establishments no more than half a million hold out till the fifth year and less than a hundred thousand actually complete the nine years' course.[1] At a sitting of the Soviet Narkoma (National Committee) of the Russian Republic some of the drawbacks that accompanied and marred those brilliant successes were enumerated, and emphasized with a degree of candor which cannot be too highly praised. During the past three years, said the president, "the number of scholars has increased from 648,000 to 900,000, whereas the premises in which the classes are held have remained as they were without any extension." It was natural, therefore, that the schoolrooms should be terribly overcrowded, and that the measures taken on behalf of the children to mitigate this defect, such as the splitting up of each class into several groups to be lectured to consecutively, had a deleterious effect on the teachers whose work was thus doubled or trebled. It was stated that the poorest children are those who abandon school earliest, long before they have finished their course, and then they have no choice but to follow the humble avocations of their parents. A girl of sixteen who belongs to the privileged order of Young Communists (Komsomolka) gave her reasons for thus leaving school as follows:

My father is a laborer in the proletarian works. His wages are only ninety roubles, so that he cannot dress me becomingly. And when I look at my girl friends (children of traders and new economic policy men) and see how they are attired according to the very

[1] *Rabotshaya Gazeta*, March 21, 1929, cited in the *Posledtnya Novosti* of Paris, March 27, 1929.

latest fashion, it stings me to the very quick. These girls frequent academies kept by first-class dancing-masters, and take lessons from fox-trotting maestros and then chuckle and strut about at evening parties. I had to give up school and get work in a factory. That enabled me to redress the balance at once, and get even with my friends.[1]

Thus lives anew the old Eve in her youngest daughters! The other stories vary slightly from that one, and all agree that lack of resources is the fury that drives them from the school benches where they might perhaps, in the fullness of time, be fashioned into those who are clothed with authority or entrusted with congenial work. But as things are they must resign themselves to the irrevocable. Fate. Or is it what the imprisoned professor called the "justice of life"?

The children in Sovietdom, although in essential points differing little from their brothers and sisters in other countries, are marked with just a slight streak of Orientalism, a touch of the Mongolian or Ugrian psyche, which, for the scientific investigator, serves to distinguish them from those of the West. They are not quite so full of fun and willfulness as the western European, they seldom realize the possible consequences of their frolics; but at the same time they are quite capable of making audacious excursions into the realms of the heroic and the ridiculous. In a secondary school of Sevastopol one of them posted up the following concise proclamation:

The main object of our task here is to pull down the political and economic structure of the Union of the Sovietist Socialist Republic.[2]

This was treason of the blackest dye which, had the guilty one been discovered, might have drawn down upon her

[1] *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, May 10, 1929, cited by *Poslednya Novosti* of Paris, May 15, 1929.

[2] *Rabotshaya Gazeta*, as cited by *Poslednya Novosti*, April 25, 1929.

severe castigation. Children's answers to questions at examinations and on other occasions are not inferior in absurdity to those recorded in British schools. "Why is our country called Sovietist?" [soviet means counsel] asks the inspector. And the child answers: "Because everybody is taking counsel there." One question in writing was: "What is the dictatorship of the proletariat?" And it ought to have evoked from all a splendid response enshrining the credo of Marx, but one child replied without hesitation in bold handwriting: "The dictatorship is the exploitation of the ruling class by the enslaved class."

Boys and girls are educated together in the schools as in the United States. This system has its admirers and advocates on the two shores of the ocean, and some of its inconveniences have often been recorded in both hemispheres. Here is a clear note of alarm from one of the vigilant watchmen of Soviet Russia:

> In the fourth group of School No. 22, Moscow, boys and girls were at daggers drawn. The former would trounce the latter and then scoff and gibe at them according to the law of the strong and the weak. The girls defended themselves as well as they could and then in order to establish peace they provided the boys with cigarettes. The latter accepted the offering as a tribute that came to them by right of conquest, and life thereafter became tolerable. In the Artemoff school a girl of thirteen was wont to cultivate intimate relations with her male comrades for which she accepted payment.

The critical spirit is so developed in mere children that it sometimes impels them to teach their parents how to behave. In Saratoff there is a mill known as No. 25. Around it one day there assembled four hundred irate school children. And on the door of the mill they nailed up this notice:

> At midday a red detachment at war with drunkenness will take this mill by storm.

Working men soon gathered to see what was going on, and peace negotiations were opened between them and the scholars. But the resolute chief of the children's detachment, refusing to parley, exclaimed authoritatively:

> We are opposed to tippling papas. We demand that it be made possible for us to learn our lessons at home. Instead of vodka we want more books bought. We further desire to bring about the closing of taverns.[1]

This method of educating parents by the instrumentality of their children is novel and refreshing. A pathetic interest attaches to the exertions made by the pedagogues of the town of Nishnedyevitsk for the purpose of familiarizing the scholars with some of the rules of hygiene. The highest authority on the subject, a certified dentist, was invited to deliver a lecture to them on the necessity of cleaning their teeth and kindred matters, and as it chanced his address was so clear and convincing that his young hearers drew practical consequences from it on the spot. They held a meeting as soon as it was over, and the resolution drawn up and passed unanimously was to the effect that a toothbrush for each scholar must be presented to them by their parents, and that the latter must also be obliged to accustom themselves to keep their own teeth clean. At first the parents do not appear to have been responsive to these reasonable demands, for two weeks' intense agitation was needed before the scholars' perseverance was rewarded. Then the important problem had to be solved: How are those cultural implements to be used? For this purpose a general rehearsal was arranged for the cleaning of teeth in the schoolroom. Hot water was first brought in and distributed to the eager scholars, then tooth powder of a kind was produced, the brushes were

[1] *Izvestia*, December 25, 1928.

critically inspected by the dominies, and the operation began. Whenever required, the teacher intervened, correcting mistakes and overcoming awkwardness, and when his exertions were received with gratitude and the children had learned their lesson thoroughly they were enjoined to teach it to their parents on their arrival home.

All this has an entertaining side which to many may seem the only one worth noting. But to me it appears to be also characteristic of much else—for instance, of the thoroughness and fixity of purpose exhibited by the Sovietists wherever their influence for good or for evil has had a fair chance of penetrating the population. On reflection one will not be disposed to underrate the part now being played among the currents of the epoch by what has been described as the hordes of Antichrist and is undoubtedly an instrument of the Unseen, a force only partly visible but, like an iceberg, most capable of crushing the masks and conventions and lies and hypocrisies that are now living, moving, and calling themselves cultural beings. Sovietism may be, as some friends of the good old times have called it, a demoniacal monster, but it is at any rate a genuine reality, as was the worm that gnawed away the tree Ygdrasil and brought about the twilight of the gods and the end of a world. . . .

What cannot but strike the close observer as characteristic of the Bolshevists is their intense earnestness, their ant-like patience, their perseverance, ingenuity, and optimism. If they have a task to perform, they study it first from all sides, discern and select the most efficacious ways of accomplishing it, and then go confidently ahead. Their researches on educational methods are exemplary and the results attained fruitful. Take children's books, for instance. As already remarked, they are purged of all the delightful old fairy tales on which millions of children in

all countries were hitherto brought up. In this the Soviets are in perfect accord with Sir Thomas Browne, who in his *Discourse of Vulgar Errors* laid down the principle that the "true knowledge of things must be had from the things themselves, not from books." He and they are both would-be exorcists of those crowds of illusions "bred amongst the weeds and tares of one's own brain which hinder the growth of scientific scholarship."

In conclusion, it may be of interest to note the thoroughness with which film, radio, gramophone are all forced to contribute to the education of the proletarian, who sometimes pines for knowledge as though it were the elixir of life. There is a pathetic touch in the following little experience published by Madame Kameneva:

Last winter I happened to be in a faraway corner of the Vladimir province fifteen versts from the railway in the village of Mstery. The winter twilight was quickly approaching, and the small peasants' huts were covered up to the roofs by soft white snow. Tired by the journey, I went to the local coöperative society. But the hall was empty at that hour and everything was quiet.

Suddenly in the still night one could hear very distinctly sounds of English speech: true, it was barbarously distorted and mutilated, but still it was quite intelligible and indisputable English.

"Dzi door, dzi table," someone's harsh voice was speaking with great difficulty.

The voice came from a small room near by. I went to the door and peeped in.

There I beheld an unforgettable scene. Amongst huge sacks of oats and rice near the table was sitting a big sturdy man with a large beard, in a sheepskin coat and white apron. He turned over pages, groaning and cursing, impatiently, and again and again uttered the strange unusual sounds and words. At first he did not notice me, but when he saw that I was there he jumped up greatly confused that he, the official of the Coöperative Society, was caught at such unbecoming business.

"Here I am," he said, "studying this damned English language. It

is difficult, but without it I shall be lost abroad. You see I want to go round the world. I want to see everything myself and study. I hope they will support me in the Coöperative—what do you think? Perhaps they will even give me some job to do abroad. . . . If I am not too old yet!"

He looked at me with anxious eyes.

The giant showed me his school book. It was a small Russian-English dictionary, English words written in Russian characters.

"I know many words," he went on. "But there is the rub, I do not know how to put them together. I hope when the summer comes I shall get my vacation. Then I shall go to town and buy proper books to study English."

This naïve huge man with the long beard was all burning with enthusiasm when he spoke about his cherished dream. In the depths of those Vladimir forests, in a small village covered up with soft white snow, he was dreaming about foreign countries. With the impulsiveness of the peasant he had started immediately to realize his ambition: and slowly but surely he was advancing. There was no grammar, no books or idioms available, but he was not dispirited and continued to plod on.

In Moscow where so many of the new Sovietist scientific organizations took their rise, there is an institute for library research and for the training of librarians. It is known to the entire world, and many of the great libraries of Europe have profited by its remarkable collections, such as the fifteen hundred photographs and drawings of works from all parts of the globe. It is divided into two sections: Scientific Research and Pedagogical Research. Much of what is to be found in every public library is classified and systematized in the courses for librarians. One of the sights of the Soviet capital is the central book chamber. The institute answers countless questions sent from all parts of the Soviet Union and from abroad. In the five years ending in 1926 well over a thousand students graduated in the institute. The course lasts only two years.

The Soviets were isolated in the world of culture after

the civil war and the extermination of the bourgeois. People of all countries and creeds fought shy of them and their anathematized works, which had brought obloquy on the name of Russia. And to recognize them seemed impossible. Foreign governments proposed conditions for the renewal of normal relations which the Soviets rejected with scorn. Skits and lampoons in the press intensified the mutually hostile sentiments and apparently destroyed all hope of reconciliation. It was at this juncture that the task appealed to Madame Kameneva, a woman of the latest type who had played an important part in the establishment of the new era, and she tackled it with courage, calmness, and confidence. She contrived, it is said, to pull down a great wall of prejudice and to effect what may be termed an intellectual revolution without offending sensibilities, or engaging in polemics. Four years ago she created a cultural center in Moscow which opened up in a brief span of time friendly relations with the intellectuals of the entire world on a purely scientific, artistic, and literary basis, and she has kept extending these helpful relations ever since. A continuous exchange of ideas, frank discussions of progressive methods, analyses of new programs, the setting of interesting problems, and the giving and receiving of helpful hints began, with marvelous effect not only on the persons who took a direct part in this placid converse but on a large portion of their respective nations. The bonds that had been cut between the Soviet Union and other countries were spliced, new strands were interwoven, and what a couple of years previously was deemed unattainable was seen to be an accomplished fact.

Japan is a striking instance of this procedure. I have known many eminent Japanese in various lands, and during my sojourn in Soviet Russia I came in contact with some who are engaged in raising the esthetic level of their coun-

trymen. They had been organizing theatrical representations of a truly remarkable kind, and an exhibition of children's toys, and incidentally studying what Soviet Russia had to offer them, which was a good deal. It is not generally known that in Japan the Russian classics and other works of more recent date are read in excellent Japanese translations. Indeed, in no country in the world is the Russian language better or more widely known, or more grammatically spoken, than in the realm of the Mikado. To me this was nothing surprising, for several of my most distinguished comrades at the University of St. Petersburg were Japanese. One of them I afterward met during the Boxer outbreak in Pekin, where he had become the first diplomatic representative of his country, and he gladly gave me every assistance in his power. In Japan there are several societies for the cultivation of Russian literature, and they coöperate with the Moscow center. It is interesting to learn the opinion which an eminent Japanese publicist has placed on record when touching on the most popular linguistic studies in his country.

> English literature [he remarks] is too intent on goodness and too tedious. French is too erotic. German is extraordinarily coarse. Russian literature alone is distinguished by its philosophy and psychology, is in fact a powerful crystal spring bubbling up from the depths of the soul.

Long epistles, well worded in Russian, were received in Moscow from Japanese scholars, men of letters, journalists, and students. But they were not all indited in the language of Pushkin and Dostoyeffsky. Many letters were couched in an artificial language employed down to the Revolution mainly by collectors of stamps, postcards, and coins, but which, owing partly to the exertions of Madame Kameneva and her fellow workers, has spread over vast

stretches of the globe as a facile means of communication between proletarians sundered from each other by mountain ranges and seas. And it has come to pass that to-day Soviet Russia can boast that it has sixteen thousand registered Esperanto linguists. Numerous Chinamen and Koreans are said to have perused works of Lenin, Tolstoy, and Turgenhieff in Esperanto! Writing on Esperanto in the *North American Review* a quarter of a century ago, I foretold the conquest of the world for certain specific objects by the unesthetic medium of communication invented by Zamenhof, and its employment by latter-day proletarians is at once congruous and felicitous. It will surprise many readers to learn that the study of Esperanto occupies the fourth place in those Soviet schools in which non-Russian languages are taught: the first place being taken by English, the second by German, and the third by French. In the factories there are already circles which for nearly two years have been corresponding with factory workers abroad by means of Esperanto. The Smolensk Young Communist Party keeps up a continuous intercourse in this language with the Communists of the East. Numbers of country newspapers publish letters in Esperanto which they receive from soldiers, sailors, and workers in various parts of Europe. A pioneer in Odessa corresponds with children abroad, and receives letters, not only from Europe, but also from America, Japan, and China, likewise in Esperanto, giving extracts from their poems and revolutionary songs. Workers in Soviet factories dispatched to Scandinavian countries their "Wall News" written in Esperanto, part of which made a deep impression on the foreign workers, who replied in eulogistic terms congratulating them on their advancement and assuring them that they too would march in line with their Soviet comrades. Factory workers and members of the Red army are espe-

cially keen to learn Esperanto, and by way of keeping their knowledge from growing rusty several congresses recently pronounced their discourses in Esperanto. As a means of intercommunication Esperanto is making such progress that it has to be reckoned with as one of the most important factors of the new era.

Owing largely to the activities of the organization presided over by Madame Kameneva, exhibitions of various kinds on large and small scales have been organized in all parts of the globe. In Afghanistan the great Soviet show near Kabul captivated the hearts of the people, who besought their guests to repeat it; which they did for several years, being materially assisted by forty-eight Sovietist organizations. That was business in the fullest sense of the term! The society of which Madame Kameneva is president courteously assists foreigners who need biographies or information about Soviet law or bibliographical data, publishes manuals to enable them to learn Russian, edits periodicals for their behoof, arranges for the exchange of important literary works between learned sections, and maintains uninterrupted relations with the South American republics, Canada, Cuba, Persia, etc. . . . The tact, ingenuity, and resourcefulness with which Japanese, German, American, Turkish, Scandinavian, and Mongolian evenings are organized, the programs made attractive, the proceedings enlivened, and durable friendships formed between the representatives of the various peoples which are never marred by jealousies, is or should be a severe object lesson to the finical societies of capitalist countries of whose velleities one reads much and of whose achievements in this line one perceives nothing.

Thus the Soviets keep numerous irons in the fire without letting any of them grow cold. This is one of their principal functions, and they perform it. They appreciate and enter

into the spirit of the work done by Madame Kameneva, hospitably receiving members of the young generation from all quarters of the globe, and teaching them how this is being done, and other useful things over and above. Were it not irreverent, one might feel tempted to suggest that statesmen of the older generation—the human foxes bereft of cunning—who are not yet too old to lead or mislead their respective peoples should likewise deign to pay an occasional visit to those Red Russian demons in order to have their eyes opened and to pick up helpful hints on the art of politics. As Molière's Dr. Diafoirus held that the best way for a patient to die is according to strict medical rules, so it may be decided that the proper way for the coming world catastrophe to be brought about is in the good old traditional manner, by trained statesmen armed with monocles, orchids, breastfuls of decorations, and an impressive oracular vocabulary. . . .

Few foreigners realize the intensity with which physical culture and the improvement of the race are pursued as paramount aims not only by the various Republics and their local organs, but by the Central government and numerous voluntary associations. One might think that with so many other calls on their energies they could devote but little attention to this subject. But there is a curious film arranged by Poselski—the man who acquired a reputation for himself at the Hague Exhibition with his film *The Problem of Diet*—which refutes that assumption and gives one an idea of the solicitude of the rulers throughout the Union for the physical health and strength of the community. The film is entitled *The Struggle for Health,* and it unfolds to the spectators the principal ways and means employed to attain the object. What it comes to is the establishment of a Prophylactical Department with branches everywhere, and through this institution a cer-

tain control is acquired over the daily life and industry of the citizen. The prevention and treatment of professional diseases are depicted in a sequence of quite interesting pictures, such as, for example, the night-nursing homes to which workers are sent by physicians to spend their leisure hours. Other films deal with maternity cases, and all the things that mothers should know and do, crèches, nursery schools, etc. The rudiments of hygiene are set forth and exemplified in a fashion so impressive that they have been mastered by multitudes of women. Remedial gymnastics are taught with equal success. An amusing and instructive set of pictures exhibits the formation of sanitary nuclei of children who are qualified to look after themselves and their comrades, see that they all keep their teeth and bodies clean, and perform the gymnastic exercises prescribed.

Foreigners often ask themselves sympathetically in what revolting stage of degeneration the Bolshevist masses will one day be found after all these years of food scarcity, famines, noxious bread substitutes, and labor combined with fasting. This fraternal solicitude is not relished in Moscow, Kharkoff, or other parts of the Union where the authorities rejoice to think that despite all those obstacles, transitory and permanent, they have raised physical culture to the place which it occupies in Western countries. Physical culture circles, with the blessing of the Moscow Commissaries, have sprung up on all sides: drilling, race running, swimming, footballing, jumping, and boxing. The physicians warmly second the government and insist upon reasonable physical exercise as the most effective preservative of health. These circles for the development of physical culture now number 3,800,000 enthusiastic members who organize reviews of their achievements from time to time.

"Spartakiades" they are called, in spite of the existence of many simpler and better terms to express them.

Winter sport in Moscow has been charmingly depicted by Madame Litvinoff in commemoration of the spartakiade held in that capital in the year 1928, where all kinds of winter amusements were indulged in, from skating to bob-sleighing, with and without special costumes, with home-made or manufactured skates, and many skating substitutes and makeshifts. This lady writes:

> Russia sallies forth daily to engage in winter sports no less effectively than the people who pay for expensive holidays in fashionable Swiss resorts and without the inevitable accompaniment of overheated rooms, table-d'hôte dinners and jazz in the evenings. Snow on the ground, frost in the air, youth in the limbs—that is the Russian equipment for winter sports. Out they run, the Mishas, the Petyas, and the Tanyas, pulling their old woollen sweaters over their heads, thrusting their fingers into harsh fingerless gloves, begging Mother to let them leave their coats behind or taking the law into their own hands by running out coatless in forty degrees of frost, and coming back a few hours later hungry, happy, glowing, and tingling.
>
> The Moscow winter at its best is something like perfection—winter sports at your door, amidst all the resources of town life, well-kept rinks in every district—an army of trained skating and ski-ing instructors, and for your little children the clean and snowy boulevards.[1]

Between these circles and the corresponding associations in foreign countries there is this marked difference, that the latter are becoming genuine professions, whereas in the Soviet republics they are the standing modes of relaxation spontaneously chosen by the working peoples themselves. In one spartakiade no less than thirty-six nationalities were represented, and the number of participants totalled six thousand. The producer of the film endeavored to emphasize as it deserved the class character of the sparta-

[1] Cf. *Vox*, 1929, 5-6, p. 9.

kiade. Consequently, a comparison between his picture and the foreign *White Stadium* is well worth making, because it clearly brings out the Marxist object of all such exercise as a mass movement. What the Soviet sportsmen aim at is the betterment of the community, not the mastership of a few of its brilliant members. The foreign film producer, on the other hand, is as eager to exhibit and emphasize the exceptionally marvelous feats of certain individuals, who devote themselves to the practice of these sleights of limb in lieu of working for the community. The Russian film had a subtitle which made this distinction manifest. It ran thus: "The physical culture which sprang from the Revolution is the freehold of the broad toiling masses." Racing, shooting, athletics of all kinds were held up as the outcome of mass drill and skill spontaneously acquired in schools, clubs, and homes of rest for the weal of the entire community. "Marxism über Alles." And in the long run these tactics bore the coveted fruit.

In the Soviet Union the growth of the population since the year 1920, in spite of the grave hindrances enumerated above, of the ease with which divorce is obtainable, and of birth control practised when needed with the help of the authorities, has been truly noteworthy. First of all it has made good the frightful loss of human life occasioned by wars, disease, and famine. But it has accomplished much more than that: it has given the population all that the normal increase—had any normal increase been possible in those calamitous years—would have given it, and added some millions of births over and above. The absolute gain since the year 1914 is 10.6 million individuals, and the time needed to effect this increment has been much less than ever before. From 1897 to 1914 the growth of the population was 1.7 per cent., whereas since the October Revolution it has risen to 2.7 per cent. The population of

Moscow has grown from 1½ to 2½ millions within less than ten years. It cannot be doubted that only 1.5 millions were due to natural causes and the remainder to migration from the country to the town. In the year 1897 the entire territory now occupied by the Union of the Soviets had fourteen cities with a population exceeding a hundred thousand, totalling together 4,249,000. In the year 1923 there were twenty-one cities, with 6,337,000 inhabitants, and by the year 1927 thirty cities, with a total population of 9,251,000. The population of Moscow rose by 34.6 per cent. in 1923, and that of Leningrad by 51.2 per cent. These are set down as encouraging results which relieve Sovietist writers of the necessity of refuting the prophecies about the physical degeneration of the nation.

Nothing is more delectable to the Soviet junta than brilliant scientific conquests, especially such as no other State can match: discoveries, inventions, combinations, deductions made by their own domestic Marxists which link the name of the Soviets with the immortal story of the rise of the human race. The very idea is bewitching. The latest workers in the field—yesterday's hewers of wood and drawers of water—making durable dents in humanity's great record. Here the brains of the community found their true rôle, and the premature deaths of the hundreds of eminent professors, already alluded to, must have been felt, perhaps for the first time, as the genuine loss that Gorky had described it.

I was present in Moscow when the men of the Krassin Expedition who had rescued Nobile and his comrades in the Polar Circle arrived home, and I was struck with the wild enthusiasm that possessed everybody. Even women and children became Corybantine. Spectators had come from remote provinces, mostly on foot, and stood outside

the great theater in which the heroes were to be publicly honored, begging for admittance. In the theater the committee of reception and the audience seemed animated by spirits from above—or below. In the obscure little hamlets of Kazakestan and Uzbekestan men and women felt uplifted by the glorious reflection that their fellows had performed a series of heroic deeds which made the whole world their debtor. To witness this rapturous outburst of enthusiasm was well worth the journey from London to Moscow. . . .

The practical lesson drawn from their first great distinction in a field so tardily opened to proletarian striving was to encourage research work, expeditions, inventions in every branch of science from astronomy to domestic medicine. And, as in most Soviet ventures, they were mostly triumphs over obstacles.

Who in Czarist times would have thought that there was still room in Russia for notable strides in geographical progress, such for instance as the announcement that a wholly unknown mountain range of a thousand kilometers, covering an area as large as the Caucasus, had been found and booked? This statement was made in the year 1927. In Siberia there is a vast space from the Lena to the east covering three thousand kilometers to the Gulf of Behring and watered by three rivers,[1] each of which is from fifteen to twenty-five thousand kilometers long. To this desolate land an expedition, thoroughly rigged out, was dispatched in June, 1926. It consisted of Professor Obrutchev and three scientific assistants. On their arrival in Aldana they hoped to reach the range in a short space of time, but found themselves compelled to traverse a hundred and fifty kilometers of uninterrupted bog. They could not get to the river Indigirka before August. Taking all possible pre-

[1]The Indigirka, the Kolima, and the Yana.

cautions, they pushed slowly forward and managed to reach the range—the ice field of Yakutsk—and crossed the upper range where it forms four parallel chains of which the highest has an altitude of 2,500 meters and is covered in parts with eternal snow. To these mountains they gave the name of the Russian geologist Cherski, who was sent by the Academy of Science in the year 1891 to study this part of Siberia. They were supplied with provisions for two months only, had to dispense with guides because there were none, and generally to contend with great difficulties. But they changed the map of the Upper Indigirka, removed the little cultural center known as Olmekon one degree of longitude and the Chitbagal one degree of latitude, and are now proceeding farther with their explorations.

Between towering rugged crags away in the extreme north of civilization lies the most northerly scientific institute for research work in the world, a marvelous temple of science, the handiwork of the Soviets, and a monument to their enterprise. In the year 1922 they found ruins and rubbish there, but by dint of hard work they soon reared an edifice which is for its purpose and opportunities one of the best now in existence. Seven spacious edifices have been built, of which six are splendidly equipped laboratories, abounding in everything a curious seeker after new discoveries can need to make him happy. Laboratories for chemistry, zoölogy, physiology, offer him abundant and varied materials. The fine museum is so filled with specimens, etc., that a second one has become indispensable and is already nearly completed. A rare collection of valuable books has taken up all the space of the library, and additional space is required. The aquarium, which teems with numerous varieties of organisms, has also become too small for its ever-growing contents, and an additional one has

been called for. The scientists, who come here every year in May and usually remain till October, are accommodated in comfortable dwellings. Students are also received and admitted to a course of six weeks, and those who in that time show special aptitude are taken into the stations to continue their investigations. There are two zoölogical courses and one physiological. In the year 1927 the number of visitors to this remotest outpost of science was 1,500, and I believe that there were 1,800 in the ensuing year.

Citizen Semihatoff, who returned in the year 1928 from an expedition to the Chihachov Mountains and the source of the Askhat and Borgazi rivers in Altai, discovered in the mountainous region of eastern Altai five glaciers hitherto unknown.

One of the pet projects of the proletarian rulers in Moscow, which, however, will be realized in partnership with other peoples, does credit to their foresight and acumen: a gradual, scientific, and thorough exploration of the entire Arctic region by means of periodical expeditions, and the organization of a permanent radio-telegraphic service. But this scheme can be carried out only after a series of preliminary works have been satisfactorily completed, such as the rigging out of one or more airship expeditions for the purpose of ascertaining the conditions for permanent systematic observation in the Arctic, and for bringing into harmony the activities of the existing Polar radio stations, besides which smaller radio stations transportable by air must be constructed and tested. Then a detailed map of the whole tract must be made as well as a historical map containing the routes taken by the principal Polar expeditions in the last two centuries, marking the frontiers of the explored regions, the direction of the ocean currents, the depths, the position of the biological, meteorological, radio-telegraphic, and other stations.

Only then can the intended airship expedition be taken in hand. It is to have Dr. Nansen as leader. The object, purely scientific, is to offer a final answer to a series of questions hitherto unsolved. Then a special type of house has to be evolved, transportable by air, suited to the climate, capable of serving not only as a dwelling, but also as a center for the taking of exact observations. The weight of a station including food and fuel for two years and twelve days is computed at 25,000 kilos. This is exclusive of the personal staff. It has been computed that such a weight would need an airship with a capacity of 100,000 cubic meters. Its starting center would be Murmansk. A station answering to these conditions is already being built. A considerable network of such stations will then be spread over the Polar regions of the continent, the islands of the ice sea, and the floating ice. The remotest points at which stations can be constructed without the aid of an airship are the northernmost spur of Nova Zembla, Kaiser Franz Josef Land, Wrangel Land, the New Siberian Islands, and the east and west coasts of Greenland. These stations will form the outer ring, so to say, of the Arctic service, and will be looked after by all the nations interested in their maintenance. The construction of the inner ring, which is feasible only with an airship, must be left to the care of an international organization which shall be subventioned by all countries of the Northern Hemisphere. The Soviet Union, which owns a large part of the vast Arctic circle and possesses such a serviceable outpost as the Polar Geophysical Observatory "Matotschin Schar," is a prominent member of this enterprising association.

During my sojourn in Moscow an interesting report was read before the Tsik[1] on the subject of chemical industry in the Union, and the necessity of giving it a new and power-

[1]The Central Executive Committee.

ful impetus, and it was resolved forthwith to assign several million roubles to the development of agricultural manure. The number of chemists in the Union compared with that of Germany when proclaimed by Citizen Galperin aroused dissatisfaction among his hearers. It appears that in all branches of chemical industry in the Union there are but 4,000 specialists, i.e., from 25 to 30 for every 1,000 workers, whereas in the German chemical industry there are about 30,000 specialists, i.e., about 150 for every 1,000 workers. It was resolved to remedy this condition of affairs at the earliest opportunity, even though foreign specialists be employed in the first phases of the reform.

At the same time a regional exhibition—with eight hundred different exhibits—was organized in Kieff, to encourage the worker to invent if he possessed gifts in that direction. Some curious successes were shown which shed a light on many things: for example, on certain kinds of dyes which were theretofore supplied only by Germany, whose prices were stiff. A method was discovered in the Ukraine which now enables the Soviet Union to dispense to a large extent with German products. Another invention by the same worker, Pavloff, consists in combining three different colors of that dye of his (yellow, orange, and blue) and superimposing them so that one hundred and eighty different colors and hues are obtained. Another invention shows up still further the emulation between German industrialists and Russian agriculturists. It is a copying-press indispensable to machine construction. As I have not seen it I am unable to give a complete description of it. The amusing part is that it could not be purchased for love or money. Engineers sent to Germany to acquire a number of those machines from a firm of high standing returned empty handed. A worker named Topacheffsky then invented a machine in every respect as good, and it costs

between 125 and 150 roubles instead of the 43,000 roubles which it fetched in Germany.

Then there was another gifted workman, Ivanoff by name, who had to wage quite a protracted struggle before he could get his inventions recognized by his own people. This clever citizen invented a substance indispensable for the electrical melting of rails which is called thermite, and also a crucible for it. After waiting, petitioning, and hoping, he received work as assistant tramway-track repairer, but no free stretch for experiments. Attracted by thermite, the supplier of which for the whole of Europe was Germany, Ivanoff went to work and soon presented brilliant results. The Soviet Union was again emancipated from the German industrial yoke, and in lieu of paying 120 roubles a pound for the substance, Ivanoff supplies it for about two roubles! The crucibles, however, were still Germany's monopoly, and they were indispensable for the melting of thermite. The price had been sixty-four roubles each, but as soon as the Soviet Union ceased to need German thermite, the price of the crucibles was raised to 230 roubles. Then Ivanoff toiled once more, and combined ideas almost uninterruptedly, until at last he produced the crucibles, which are superior to those of German firms and cost only six or seven roubles each. An extraordinary invention by a working man named Kuklin is a column for the study of the creation of the world. The object of the invention is to bring home to the masses the scientific theory of the appearance of life on the earth and the rise and destruction of worlds and the forces that keep them going. The column is divided into sections in which the main lines of the theory are pithily but clearly set forth: the cause of constant movement, the origin of electrons and protons, the explanation of storms, etc. It appears to be a very useful aid to children and to the bulk of the

people generally. Incidentally a flyer named Yakovchuk built a glider of his own and took a prize at the international competition and another at the Pan-Union Exhibition at Theodosia.

The whole world has heard of L. S. Teremin and his invention—since perfected by a Frenchman—which enables us to hear the "music of the spheres." His laboratory is situate in Leningrad in the State Physico-Technical Röntgenological Institute, where one can see the results of his interesting researches on the subject of television and electric safety signals.

A successful experiment of recent date[1] turns upon steel that will not rust and can therefore be employed in the manufacture of artificial teeth. This steel is the outcome of numerous experiments made in the Zlatoustoffsk Mechanical Works. Its properties are such that gold can now be dispensed with entirely in the making of artificial teeth.

But one of the most curious ideas of all is entertained by the Central Department of Science. It consists of a detailed plan for a vast museum refrigerator in the Far East, capable of preserving the bodies of human beings and animals in their original state for thousands of years.

The museum intends to avail itself of the phenomenon of the so-called "eternal frosts" observed in Siberia and the Far East. The well known discoveries in the perpetually frozen regions of the corpses of mammoth animals, the flesh of which is fresh enough to eat after thousands of years in "cold storage," prove the possibility of such preservation.

The museum refrigerator is intended to form a collection of bodies of the peoples of all races, the objects in use during their lifetime, modern foodstuffs, and specimens of animals becoming extinct.[2]

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[1] July, 1929.

[2] Cf. *Voks*, 1928, 50-1, p. 17.

According to the Academy of Sciences there are at present in the Union, working away at discovery, 26,000 "scientists," of whom 12,000 are in Leningrad and Moscow. These and countless organizations and enterprises grip the open-minded foreigner's attention and help him to realize what is being deliberately undertaken and persistently carried out in Sovietdom for the furtherance of race-culture, of general enlightenment, of craft proficiency, and of artistic mastership. It is a stupendous maze of ant-like activities, never ending, ever expanding, entered upon as a duty in the service of—man? Well, not exactly that, but in the service of the Marxist man, him of the chosen race of proletarians that has been redeemed by the genial critic of capitalism. But it is not enough to rise to the heights, one should also take heed lest one fall. And for the multitude who fail in this and have already rolled down to the cities of the plain there is another labyrinth of wakeful, painstaking, healing agencies, that by dint of forcible words of truth and soberness serve to awaken the dazed prodigals to consciousness, to qualms and attempts at emendation.

Alcoholism, from which for a few years all Russia was quite free, is now again become a plague of the Bolshevist "paradise." And the struggle against it in all its stages, wherein new methods vying with the old are vigorously applied, is in full swing daily. The programs of some of the anti-alcoholist bodies consist of excursions of workers to the country and evenings in the clubs, spent in friendly talks or watching moving pictures or listening to interesting lectures got up for the purpose of enlightening workers on the subject of alcohol and its deadly effects, and of filling them with a determination to stay its incursions, of realizing their resolutions and exertions, and of providing them with every feasible assistance. Few countries have got rid

of the curse of alcohol, and more than one which had nearly eradicated it has had a relapse. But in Sovietdom, which aims at special perfection, the havoc it produces is more noticeable than elsewhere and leaves a deeper and gloomier impression behind. Nothing is more sour than sweet milk. *Corruptio optimi pessima.*

Physicians have been working for years to reduce the evil, to save those of its victims who are not lost beyond recovery, and to render the healthy immune. It is uphill work, and the lapses, slips, and subsidences that mark its advance are extremely dispiriting. But dejection among the Bolshevists is as unknown as was fear to Siegfried. They go ahead to success or failure bright with sunshine of the mind, never doubting, never wavering. It is a memorable lesson to look at the faces of the working men in their clubs listening religiously to the radio's explanations and exhortations, and then discussing the subjects mooted and calling for further light. Many a workmen's club is become a blockhouse in which resolute enemies of alcoholism abound. Everywhere similar centers preach and demonstrate. A part of the Red Fleet is joining in the campaign. In various places the sale of vodka has been superseded by that of fruit juices. In Kharkoff official posters praising certain wines and spirits have been torn down by the railwaymen, and in their stead a series of others put in place, warning the nation against the consumption of alcohol.

In the city of Rybinsk the children, more precocious or more experienced in Russia than elsewhere, clubbed together and set out one afternoon on an anti-alcoholic expedition. Wending toward the factory where their fathers and brothers and uncles were at work, they reached the gates at 5 P. M. when the men were passing through on their way home. The band of boys and girls stopped them and summoned them to hold a meeting on alcoholism

then and there. Their demand was good-humoredly acceded to, impressive speeches were delivered, and the meeting closed with a resolution to shut down the central spirit store. Much has been done toward enforcing the law against illegal distillation and reducing the practice. In spite of these and countless other crusades, lectures, etc., drunkenness is undoubtedly on the increase, and is one of the standing causes which handicap factories and governmental offices and swell the dismal, downfallen band of human beings who are on their way to the asylum or the grave.

In Leningrad, trade in alcohol in thirteen coöperative stores was forbidden by the agitators. In all shops of the ex-capital in which commerce is permitted on Sundays the sale of vodka and alcoholic drinks has been prohibited. In Moscow seventy-five coöperative stores have been compelled to cease to sell them. In some of the clubs of Leningrad, Kharkoff, Kazan, and other cities neither vodka nor beer is permitted. Tea houses and restaurants are taking the places of taverns. In Moscow the men in a well-known timber works issued a decree to the effect that every one of their comrades who came to the factory in a state of inebriety would be dismissed forthwith.

But, as I have said, in spite of all these efforts the number of men who spend their earnings on drink, leave their work, run amok generally, and receive pay on false pretexts is causing disquietude, although much is being done to lessen it. The case of those who are slaves to the habit is undertaken by a network of organizations, many of which give their services gratis. These are dispensaries in which those victims of drink are treated by experienced specialists. In Moscow alone fifty thousand workers went there of their own free will. I saw some of them in the antechamber—men with pale, drawn faces and dull eyes —playing chess and reading old journals, while awaiting

their turn to be shown into the consulting rooms to have their fate decided. The first step is entire abstinence from drink, and this is attained in the majority of cases by psychotherapeutic measures, such as suggestion, hypnosis, etc. Some sixteen thousand cases were treated in this way and the percentage of favorable results was said to be satisfactory. After that comes the general cure, for the brain, the heart, the stomach, the kidneys are all affected, and the entire organism is sadly out of gear. The patients need many remedies and correctives, electric treatment, baths, douches, oxygen, diet, etc. This complicated procedure, despite the time and cost involved, was received by well over a million patients. But unless completed by efficient means to stay the vice before it has taken permanent hold of its incipient victim, no remedial treatment is of avail. These prophylactic functions are discharged by bodies of altruistic workers who devote themselves to the task apostolically. Drunkenness being often the outcome of dissatisfaction with home life, the shiftless, thriftless way in which it is improvised, and the privations it inflicts on the man, the first care of those who would stave off its approach is to change those obnoxious conditions and introduce cleanliness in the hut, teach thrift to the wife, and make the interior, if possible, more attractive than the pothouse and the canteen. A difficult, if an indispensable, task. To discharge it properly one needs sisters of "social assistance," who resemble those of the Catholic orders, to bring sunshine to the dismal hearth and joy to the downcast family. The Soviets, curiously enough, are provided with that highly specialized kind of woman worker who calls at the home of the afflicted laborer, cheers up his family like a trusted friend, causes ugly little things to vanish from his abode which worried and chafed the nervous inmate, often without his noticing them. This welcome visitor is ready

with sound advice on hygienic matters, helps to get the children off to school or to an infants' home, obtains pardon for the repentant father, has him reinstated in the factory, and insists on getting a solemn promise from his comrades that they will not again take him to the vodka canteen.

These visits to the huts by the sisters of "social assistance" numbered 660 in the year 1924, and in 1928 they had risen to 15,000.

I marveled much at this unexpected phenomenon: an unofficial, unpretentious order of women calling all their intellectual and moral gifts into requisition in order to save the weaker types of their comrades from absolute ruin. And this in a land like the Soviet Republics where religion is hated and scoffed at and consequently supernatural impulses are excluded. The motives? I asked that question in one of my articles, and a Sovietist critic writing in an official Moscow journal informed me that it was simple enough: All those self-denying individuals, he said, had trained themselves to identify their own personal interests with those of the community of which they are members.

This explanation leaves me unsatisfied. Neither personal nor community interests are adequate to sustain such altruism as characterizes those lay sisters of charity. One might just as well declare that as in Sovietdom property and possession are abolished, virtue can be dispensed with and substitutes may be created without difficulty.

To sum up: All Russia is thrilled with heart-expanding fervor, and passion is at white heat. Nowhere is life so intense, so volcanic, so all-absorbing. Whithersoever you move you encounter embodiments of methodic activity: plans and projects, complex, colossal, costly, simple, plebeian, and professional, are everywhere discussed, focused, criticized. In the streets you hear of the six-hundred-

million-roubles agreement of Henry Ford with the Soviet government for the purchase of Ford cars; in the clubs the talk is of musical, theatrical, and educational schemes, of films and radio, of the one hundred and sixty thousand students, mostly proletarians, listening to lectures in universities and high schools. Every night you find the theaters filled with human beings resting from their labors, but eager, curious, drinking in every word and gesture of the actors. In a crowded lecture room a dispute is going on between a scrupulous Church dignitary and a humorous people's commissary; in another hall you may listen to a splendid symphony concert with a classical program interpreted without a conductor. The films draw myriads of spectators in various quarters of the cities, despite their unsatisfactory contents, which, however, are vastly superior to those of western Europe and America, the reason being that they are not mere commercial undertakings but instruments of genuine enlightenment and culture. Operas and operettas are being composed and represented by competent playwrights in the cities and by the blacksmith, tailor, and postman in the villages, each one according to his resources, his lights, and his audience, and in town and country one notices the unmistakable Russian touch in the technique of the representation; in the streets you meet groups of children or adults pilgrimaging devoutly to the museums, which are now become art schools for the millions. Newspapers are as snowflakes. The number printed is now about nine millions and it is still growing, and their influence—evil or good—is most powerful. It is well worth meditating on, that despite the limited circle of scientific readers, men and women are athirst for scientific knowledge, as is attested by the fact that nearly a thousand *purely scientific* works issued from the press in sixteen million copies! Of technical manuals three and

a half million copies are published. In this connection a curious incident occurred which will interest the English-speaking public. Professor Pavloff is one of the most brilliant luminaries in the world to-day, and a visit to his wonderful laboratory is a new revelation. Well, Professor Pavloff brought out a purely scientific work entitled *The Function of the Greater Hemisphere of the Human Brain.* The price was three roubles, and the number of copies turned out by Commissary Khalatoff was ten thousand. But many critically disposed Communists called it a waste of money and paper. Even members of the State Printing Department declared that a work costing three roubles and devoted to a subject so special and so difficult could not possibly find ten thousand purchasers in the course of many years. Within twelve months the book was sold out and not a copy of it was in stock, so that a new edition had to be prepared and published. This occurrence throws instructive light on the impecunious students and culture-seekers in the Soviet Republic. Soviet literature is marked by a superabundance of works of all kinds—novels, short stories, psychological sketches, verses, memoirs. And they have received high praise from home and foreign critics. I read several and felt unable to join the chorus, but I readily admit that some of those productions are considerably above the average. In the meanwhile, Tolstoy, Turghenieff, Dostoyeffsky, etc., keep their places unchallenged.

In Moscow and Leningrad exhibitions are organized on a large scale A. M. D. G., and they cause amazement and misgivings among foreign peoples, who are wont to ask: "Can any good come from Sovietdom?" The book exhibition at Cologne in 1928, for which Commissary Khalatoff was chiefly responsible, challenged superlative praise from all the critics who consigned their judgment to paper. Even I, who had some idea of how the Republics were

advancing, was not prepared for the grandiose, illuminating spectacle that unfolded itself to our view. And throughout the globe this labor of impressing foreigners with the vastness of the tasks performed and the simplicity of the methods, goes on without cease. The Soviet Republics are an agglomeration of human hives, and the observer who draws near to distinguish and analyze is bewildered. The maxim everywhere honored and believed is: "Be up and doing." There is seemingly no time for meditation, no room for Hamlet natures who think and weigh and hesitate. One and all they are swept into outer darkness and their places on the earth's surface know them no more. Every night when I returned home from my studies, my head dizzy and my mind puzzled, I realized that I had witnessed nothing comparable to these stirring scenes, to this spectacular array, in New York, Pekin, Paris, or London. It was unique and symbolical, for it betokens the fateful fact that Sovietdom has become a Vulcan's forge for the supply of new cultural arms in the forthcoming war of the world.

Looking over the serried ranks of those blithe, picturesque followers of Lenin I reflected that on the morrow they might again be hungry and thirsty, loitering about the highways and byways, leaning against walls and doorposts in the snow and sleet and rain or under the fierce rays of the midsummer sun, awaiting their turn to buy a little bad bread. Since then that morrow has dawned, and the terrible fact is visible, sensible; rye, the staple bread of the country, costs roughly speaking about fifty-five copecks a pound as compared with three copecks in 1913, and to my knowledge some families have had to dispense with salt for several weeks. And packages of provisions such as were admitted to the country during the famine of 1921 but were subsequently discontinued, are again being allowed, and relatives in foreign lands who can

are availing themselves of the privilege to alleviate the distress of those near and dear to them who can no longer help themselves.[1] It is in truth a terrible tragedy: high hopes, far-reaching projects, and dire realities. . . .

Is this too the "justice of life"? I doubt it. It is rather one of the incarnations of the demonic forces of the universe.

[1]It is somewhat surprising, however, that the Soviet government should impose a heavy tax on all such packages. For example, those parcels which cost 125 francs to buy are charged 134 francs and 35 cents duty!

CHAPTER VIII

WOMEN

THE new woman is one of the specific creations of Bolshevism. Other countries anathematize the insolent amorality of the Soviets, or else copy from them the little for which they can find a place in their own decrepit ordering. The Soviet woman, emancipated in both meanings of the word, is the equal of her male fellow citizen in private and public life, has unlimited power over her body, which she may dispose of as she lists without incurring the slightest penalty. Household cares are shackles from which she must at all costs be freed. She is to be taught everything for which she manifests taste and talent and is to be employed in every occupation for which she is qualified in villages, towns, factories, on the same conditions as male citizens. But at the head and front of her life social and political aims are placed, and her inborn gifts and cultural acquisitions are to be applied to the realization of these. Women keep step with their husbands and brothers: they discuss on an equal footing with these the important topics of the day and the art of governing; they are members of councils, commissions, and expeditions; they are to be found in all branches of the administration and in various difficult enterprises, and are the very soul of all governmental undertakings. Coming to statistics we learn that in Leningrad and its district 56 per cent. of the "section" workers are women; in Moscow there are 7,322 women section workers, or 40 per cent. In the Astrakhan district

the percentage of female sections in 50.4; in Nishny Novgorod it is 46; and in the district of the same name in the year 1927 there were 948 female section workers in fifteen different places.

Women's activities in the sections are multifarious, but their aim is one. Readers who would fain read as they run may not care to peruse a list of the many functions allotted to them, but the result would well repay the trouble, for nothing else can convey such a complete and amazing idea of what Sovietist women are silently achieving for their government and country. Nothing to match this feat, which I chronicle without characterizing, can be instanced in ancient or modern times. It is one of the "miracles" of Bolshevism to have mobilized the feminine half of the population, infused into them a spirit of enthusiasm, devotion, and selflessness, and thus to have enabled the community to exist and progress. It is no exaggeration to affirm that the triumph of the Revolution was largely the work of women, whose courage, buoyancy, and resourcefulness are unmatched. They have removed mountains of dangers and difficulties from the path of the Soviets, and during the civil war, when the star of Bolshevism was apparently setting, they donned military uniform, shouldered rifles, joined the ranks of fighters, and acquitted themselves as heroines. Hence the tendency of the government to widen woman's field of action, to free her from household cares, to reduce her rôle of female to the narrowest possible compass, and to make of child-birth, seeing that nature continues to impose it on women, a mere passing incident in their lives. In Little Russia the wife of an ex-Czarist officer who had joined the ranks of the Revolutionists and become a leading spirit among them, described the Bolshevist ideal in the following somewhat crude but con-

cise shape: "Away with the family, husbands, pots, and kettles, and hurrah for free woman!"[1]

In the first place, then, women have the supervision of all interiors: They go from house to house, ascertain the hygienic wants of the families, and send in reports that cause these to be supplied. In Leningrad alone 7,000 houses were thus inspected by women who found fault with numerous arrangements and called for reforms. In Moscow several hundred women were employed in this way, and they sent in complaints about 90,000 houses! The section workers also ferret out empty houses and unoccupied land, and on the latter, when dwellings cannot be erected there, they arrange for the laying out of public parks, gardens, or squares. In the empty houses they run up meeting rooms, and have lectures delivered on sanitary problems, epidemics, infectious diseases, etc. These women inspectors themselves deliver lectures on social diseases, such as syphilis, tuberculosis, drunkenness, and prostitution. They also prowl about the abodes of the people in search of sufferers from these maladies, and are accompanied by a trained nurse qualified to diagnose the illness, and whomsoever they find in need of treatment they remove to a hospital without more ado. To the poorer workers they distribute spittoons, beds, and in cases of necessity see that their rooms are repapered. In Moscow alone there are forty thousand women engaged in this special branch of social work. They worm their way into every house, every workshop, every factory, and are sometimes better acquainted with what goes on there than are the members of the families and the staffs.

There are also educational sections, and there too the women, despite their limited education, effect reforms that are said to be excellent. They note how the institutions

[1]Cf. *The Path of Our Growth* (in Russian). Edited by S. I. Simidovitch, 1929, Moscow-Leningrad.

for pre-school children are being conducted, whether the rooms are warm, lightsome, and airy enough, whether suitable warm food is being supplied to the children, etc. In the schools they satisfy themselves that the teachers are distilling Communistic, and not religious, principles into the waxen minds of their charges. They look carefully into everything, assemble the bairns in the school, have cheap hot meals cooked, see that cleanliness is a reality, get together school coöperatives; that is to say, they arrange for the scholars themselves to buy what they require, instead of troubling the parents with these matters. They oblige the children to be in school at the hour fixed and to leave it when the time is up. They watch how the scholars are being treated by the teachers and how the children behave toward the latter. They keep an eye on the school library and have it always in order and readiness. It is they who arrange the museums, cast the accounts of the school, keep in close touch with the "pioneers," assess the work that is being done by the club, pick out among the pupils the salient talents, and prepare excursions for the diligent by way of encouragement.

Obviously these "section women" are the eyes and ears of the authorities, and their experiences are sometimes amusing. In a provincial town a section member found a school of which the teacher was a woman of the old régime who religiously taught her pupils the catechism and took them to church herself on Sundays and holy days. And in Moscow a woman sectionist alighted upon a school in which the teachers carefully selected the offspring of ex-capitalists and N E P men and gave them longer music and dancing lessons than their poorer comrades were receiving—a tribute of the heart. Nearly all these teachers were personal friends or relatives of directors, and many of them knew nothing whatever of Communistic work. When the piquant report

on their establishment was presented by the woman section worker, the governing committee was alarmed and decided to dismiss nearly all the directors, teachers, and children, and to have the school, thus purged, reopened on Communistic lines.

Another branch of the section worker's duties is the reconnoitering of the coöperative organizations. In this field they generally have things their own way. And they delight in discharging this congenial duty. Men jokingly say that women are everywhere: in the house, in the factory, in the financial departments conducting numberless operations. And this would appear to be true. They take it greatly to heart when they see how some coöperative officials cheat the public and fill their own pockets. They cannot stand by with equanimity when they behold the purchaser being tricked out of his full weight or measure. "It is not other people's goods that we are looking after," say these conscientious inspectors, "they are our very own, for they belong to our Government, and that means to ourselves." One woman, recounting her experiences, said: "I was put over Shop No. 2; they gave me a paper. I hurried off in the morning before the staff was changed. There were a lot of people waiting outside. I kept a vigilant watch. At first I noticed nothing particular. Then suddenly my attention is drawn to a purchaser and the seller arguing about something. The seller says, 'There are no galoshes.' The working man waxes angry and then goes away. Soon after a young man comes along and, bowing to the salesman, whispers, 'Are they ready?' He replies, 'Yes, they are ready,' whereupon the youth hands him a paper. At this conjuncture I advanced quickly to the counter where the products were being sold, and saw the attendant making him up a parcel of galoshes. 'Wait a moment, citizen,' I called out, 'this matter is not in order. A moment ago I

heard it said that there were no galoshes, yet here you are being given a pair. Show me your card!' He refused to present his card. I then went to the director and had the whole matter looked into. It transpired that the would-be purchaser had no right to buy anything. He belonged to no party. But he happened to be the tailor of the salesman who was handing him a receipt for the coat he had made for him, in payment of which he was giving him a pair of galoshes!"

This female section worker, going on to recount some more of her experiences, says that she visited six other coöperative establishments, and in one of them noticed that when weighing out a kilo of sugar the attendant only gave seven eighths of a kilo, keeping the remainder for himself. "While I was standing there," she added, "sixty-eight persons came along. I counted them one by one for a long while, and at last I reckoned that the coöperative attendant had gained in this way for himself eight and a half pounds of sugar. Here I broke in, saying: 'By this method of counting, the coöperative has gained twenty-five pounds of sugar in three days!' Children, I noticed, were cheated even more than their elders. When people buy a hundred grams of cheese, it is weighed together with the thick paper in which it is wrapped up, so that the purchaser hardly knows whether it is cheese or paper that has been bought!" Furthermore, this sectionist noticed that on one occasion when sent to control the sale of goods for which the government had lowered the prices, she noticed that the prices varied according to the different people in the same coöperative. Wine, caviar, salmon, plates with gold rims, etc., were being sold at the lower cost, whereas herrings, flour, sugar, butter, and bread were being offered at the higher prices —that is to say, luxuries were being sold cheaper than the staple necessaries of the proletarian. Again, she discovered

that the attendants in the coöperative were rough and impolite to the would-be buyers. One poor woman who was examining the goods she wanted, finding that they were not of the best, asked if there was nothing better. The reply vouchsafed her was that if she didn't like the things she could clear out, for plenty of other purchasers would come and buy what she rejected.

Another branch suitable for women section workers is the law administration. Their work there is to see that the writs are served on the proper individuals and that these turn up in court at the time fixed. They soon perceived that the organization was defective and resolved to better it. For instance, several people received summonses to come to the court at nine in the morning of a certain day, and when they turned up they found that numerous other people had also received orders to come to the same place at the same hour and on the same day. The consequence was that many people—witnesses as well as principals—had to remain standing in a queue until late in the evening, and then to return home with their cases unheard. They had to go back the next day and the next, and in this way much valuable time was lost.

In the People's Court there are many women judges, especially in the town of Kazan, where most of the population is Tartar. The Tartar women are generally much behind their Russian sisters, but there are exceptions. In 1927 1,018 women judges were elected, most of them Tartars, and it is stated that they all justified the highest hopes placed in them. The women sectionists have further to see that there is no flirtation going on between the men and the women judges, that the tasks are performed without delay and well, that no rough treatment is meted out to the applicants, and that investigations are taken in hand at once. They have to satisfy themselves that offenders receive just

retribution. They also probe most closely the doings of those who consult private lawyers, and they keep a permanent watch on the militia.

Those functions constitute only a part of their duties. Another branch of the women sectionists' activity lies in the sphere of commerce. Here they have to oversee works, factories, etc., to ascertain the outlay and the returns, the margin of profits, whether the factories need repainting, new machines, or extension, whether the quality of the goods turned out is up to the mark, whether the taxes are too high, whether there are not too many officials in proportion to the number of workers, whether there are apprentices, whether these are being thoroughly taught, whether the women are being properly treated, whether the work generally is going ahead satisfactorily, whether there are absentees from work, and if there be such, why they are absent. Again they must know the amount of work set for each and judge whether it is too much or too little, how much each worker is paid per day, whether the director is making a correct return of his earnings, whether facilities for physical culture are being supplied to the workers, whether everything is insured, and whether the statements set out in the insurance are correct; lastly, whether the supplies provided by the government are honestly employed or the authorities are being exploited.

Another important branch is the Communist property section. It includes water, electricity, canalization, tramways, autobuses, street cleaning, and repairing. The women are responsible for all this being properly done. They superintend public baths and laundries, hinder water and electricity from being wasted, enter the coöperative dwellings to examine the pipes lest they have burst and water should be flowing uselessly. Mention should also be made of the Labor section. Here the women who preside watch over

the interests of the proletarians and see that they receive work and what work it is, private or governmental, and above all things they must prevent persons in quest of employment from being taken on without having passed through a labor exchange. They also help to equip workrooms for those who are without employment; they take care that the workers' lives are insured, and that pensions are paid to those who are ill and unable to do anything.

Then comes the Social section, whose members have to see that invalids, prostitutes, and beggars are duly cared for. Work is given to beggars, prostitutes are dispatched to reform institutions, and invalids are watched over or sent to hospitals. Then there is the Peasants' section, whose members regulate the matters that interest the husbandman, such as the number and accessibility of veterinary surgeons, hospitals, schools, clubs. They must also see that the poor peasant and not their well-to-do neighbors receive what is necessary from the government. It is also their duty to find out whether the peasants are being made to pay adequate taxes to the Communist government—a most delicate and unpleasant but important task. Another section deals with finance taxation, and here women play an important rôle, but in order to qualify for it they require to be more highly educated than for most of the other tasks. Their special function is to go into the complaints of tradesmen who pretend that their taxes are too high and petition for a reduction. The women to whom this function is confided generally perform it so thoroughly that after having gone over the outlay and returns of the querulous tradesmen they often end by finding that he has been taxed too little by 100 per cent.

The Red army section is perhaps the most important of all, if regard be paid to the objects of their solicitude. The women sectionists have to see that abundance of light, air,

and food is provided for the soldiers, that suitable books and pamphlets, etc., for reading are supplied to them, and they must find out what subjects the soldiers discuss among themselves. Workers, male and female, and also peasants, may visit the Red army men, but the sectionists must know who the visitors are and what topics they talk about. For, as has already been remarked, they are the eyes and ears of the Central government.

In summer, when there is hardly any important section-work business to be transacted in the towns, the women are not allowed to repose. They have to betake themselves to the country in groups of twenty or thirty, as though they were simple excursionists, and in this unobtrusive guise they are able to obtain and supply the government with interesting information as to the lives of the people in the rural districts, and how their various institutions are being run. These women workers are indispensable to the Soviet authorities, and their work is duly appreciated. It is a noteworthy fact that they carry out their program much better and more thoroughly than men could; in fact, it has been affirmed that only women are capable of doing it satisfactorily. For one thing, they can be relied upon not to accept bribes and to bear in mind the interests of the Soviets. For Lenin's ideal is ever before their eyes, that women should take an adequate part in governing their country.

From the beginning of the new era Lenin declared that his most helpful allies would be the female element when fully emancipated, not only from the wrongs put upon them by capitalists, but also from household cares. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that his government should have been at such pains to educate the women of the various Republics, and especially in the east, where they are so far behind the times. For this purpose, therefore, neither exertions nor money are grudged. The benighted state of those

populations when the Soviets took them in hand can hardly be imagined, and yet without a brief sketch one would have no measure of their success or failure.

Of the many nationalities in the Soviet Union the most backward are the Orientals, who have not yet emerged from the depths of ignorance and intellectual helplessness in which they have been plunged for centuries. Their traditions, customs, religious precepts are all so many obstacles to the march of progress and enlightenment. The laws enacted by the Soviets, who proceeded with tact and deliberation, making temporary allowances for immemorial prescription and religious scruples, are eluded consciously and unconsciously by the people, and it often happens that the tribunals which have to administer those laws are positively ignorant of their tenor and make a muddle of things. There are more than twenty such autonomous republics and territories in the Union, with a population totaling more than thirty millions. Most of these are misnamed Oriental; some are nomads, others sedentary; each one leads its own life, has its own particular occupations and generally its own atmosphere. The inhabitants of the extreme north are precluded from husbandry; in fact, they cannot sow even rye and have to support life on reindeer, fish, and their luck and dexterity in hunting furred animals. The highland races such as the Kirghiz, Buryats, etc., are graziers. The function of woman in the household of nearly all those peoples is all-important, and her status in Czarist times was degrading. In a certain number of communities such as the Tartars, Chuvashes, Bashkirs, the males and females take part on an equal footing in every kind of work incident to their monotonous existence. Among the Kirghiz, Kalmucks, Buryats, etc., the main burden lies on the woman. According to trustworthy statistics, in the Ural province a Cossack woman devotes 2,579 hours an-

nually to labor, i. e., double the number given by her mate. By the laws of the Soviets, which are obligatory on all those republics and territories, women and men are now equal in matters of property and agricultural rights. But the Mohammedan mullahs, the koolaks, and petty capitalists are all ranged against the new regulations. Hence the old habits are still flourishing, mostly like the violet in the shade, but occasionally in the broad light of day.

Illiteracy is the rule among all except the Armenians and the Georgians, hardly more than 10 per cent. and sometimes only 5 per cent. of the males being able to read, and fewer still of the females. The Soviets at first set to grounding them in reading and writing, one by one. Progress was necessarily slow, and relapses into illiteracy were frequent and irritating, but by persevering they could point in the year 1927 to 9,000 Uzbek girls undergoing training in schools and seventeen special establishments for women only. They prepare and qualify women to be midwives, schoolmistresses, pre-school teachers, and to exercise various other callings. Then for adult women there were ten schools. In Turkmenistan, among 800,000 inhabitants there were only 25 educated women in the year 1920, whereas at present 10 per cent. of the women can read, write, and do sums in arithmetic. Flushed with these partial successes, the Soviets, after the fifteenth congress in the Eastern Provinces, intensified their efforts and made noteworthy strides with education. Mothers can now be trusted to look after the hygiene of their children if they wish to keep them at home. How great a step this is may be deduced from the fact that a short time ago the good people had no notion what soap was, nor of the uses of a midwife; indeed, they had never even heard of such a person. When a woman was expecting the birth of a child they dealt with her in the hallowed traditional way: they bundled

her off to a shed, an outhouse, or a distant part of the dwelling, held her in position while her stomach was being squeezed and pinched and pressed hard, her tongue pulled well out, and her whole body thoroughly shaken so that the child should come out the quicker. She herself was counted unclean for a considerable period after this, and was kept in isolation. When a woman was childless and her husband wished for offspring they gave her a potion to drink which is said to be an infallible specific against sterility, but would not seem appetizing to the Western palate. It is a soup made of parturient tadpoles. And she had no choice but to swallow it and await results. As the people were extremely dirty and seldom washed themselves or cleaned their dwellings, the latter were filthy and teeming with crawling vermin.

The schools are endeavoring to free them entirely of these insects, and to eradicate all the unsavory habits alluded to. Besides lectures, pictures, practical demonstrations, etc., a number of booklets have been published for the behoof of the inhabitants. Special teachers are dispatched from the center of Russia to instruct them on those subjects and to see that they profit by the lessons. Magic lanterns and cinemas have been provided for their amusement and education. In this connection a curious phenomenon was observed. Whenever a film was shown representing the habits and customs of their own village, the people became greatly excited, laughing, shouting, and clapping their hands. They wept and cried alternately when they beheld the film of a young girl forced to marry an old man, and they laughed heartily at the disgruntled mullah who was left stranded when the girl ran away and refused to be forced into such a union. Then it was pointed out to them that these were daily happenings in their own village, and that they had the remedy in their own hands;

but they replied that they had never before realized this. Neither had they ever reflected how hard were their lives. Formerly the Uzbek woman did not dare to go out to a public gathering on any pretext whatsoever; now the Soviets have insisted that a special paper (summons) be given to her which makes it obligatory on her to attend the meetings convoked, and the consequence is that 90 per cent. of the women of Central Asia are present at the meetings held. There they are obliged by law to remove their parandja. Now for the first time a Uzbek woman has acquired the right to sit beside her husband, brother, father, neighbors, and show herself with face uncovered. Their spiritual heads (mullahs) did all they could to prevent the women from removing their parandja: they coaxed, threatened, and terrorized them, but to no purpose, for the Soviet authorities were behind the weaker sex, and in consequence the women stood firm. So too did the champions of the old order, and in the course of three months fourteen women without parandjas were found murdered. In one case a number of men decoyed a woman who had thus thrown aside her parandja, took her to a house, locked the door, and offered her wine most politely, which she refused. "What," they exclaimed, "you refuse to drink wine! You who imitate European women have yet to learn that they all uncover their faces and drink wine." She was then compelled to empty her glass, and when drunk was undressed and raped by several of the men present.

Thus the struggle for the emancipation and enfranchisement of the Oriental woman is sanguinary and ferocious. How sanguinary may be gathered from the circumstance that in central Asia, during a few months of the year 1929, 300 female agitators were murdered or grievously wounded because they inveighed against the chadra that covered

the women's faces and the parandja, which hinders them from working. These and similar savage deeds exasperated the women, and on the first of May during the festivities, thousands and thousands of them tore off their parandjas in public squares and burned them on the spot.

When the Uzbek women start out for their work in the factories they are still too timid to discard their national costume while walking in the streets, but once they get to their destination they put on the same clothes as their comrades and change again to come home. One of the many difficulties with them arises from the food question. Their religion, Islam, absolutely forbids them to eat the flesh of swine, and as sausage is the staple food of factory workers the women there divided themselves into two groups —the Uzbeks as Moslems sitting at one table and the sausage eaters at another.

Conflicts have also originated in the divergence between the Sovietist marriage law and the time-hallowed customs of the people. For example, in all those Oriental districts it was the custom for a girl to marry at twelve or thirteen, but now the legislators have raised the age at which marriage is permissible. But the people hold to use and wont, so, by way of reconciling these with the statutes, they bribe the Soviet official, who then enters the bride in the books as the elder instead of the younger daughter of the family, and under this name she is given in marriage. Women still continue to be sold in places and bought for a kalym. They are still regarded as of no account, nor are their words heeded or listened to. Rich men still have each a number of wives.

In the Sayatsky district of Turkmenistan a native woman was divorced from her husband and was then bought from the latter for 150 roubles by the secretary of the Soviet

law court. But he paid only 135 roubles, cheating the seller out of 15 roubles, and so the matter was brought before the tribunal by the woman's former husband.

In the Bukhara district a woman left her husband and went off with another man, which by Soviet law she had a perfect right to do. But according to the traditions of her sect she was a guilty person deserving punishment. The matter was duly brought before a local tribunal. No punishment, however, is enacted by Soviet law for a man who abducts another man's wife; but as the local officials sympathized with the first husband, being themselves Mohammedans, they treated the offender, i. e., the second husband, by analogy, as though he had stolen wood from a forest or poached, and they condemned him to the full penalty for such an offense—one year's imprisonment!

To give an idea of the difficulties of bringing the Uzbek women into line with modern ideas, the following instance may be worth recording. Formerly the men treated their womenkind as slaves. It was the latter who made by hand all the celebrated Bukhara carpets, while the husbands, brothers, or fathers merely took them to the markets and sold them there. The women never knew what price was fetched for the products of their labor, nor what was done with the money, that being the man's province. But since the Soviets have taken the education of the women in hand it is the other way round. The women who make the carpets, etc., are also the persons who bring their work to the coöperative society and receive the money paid for them, the husbands being left out of the reckoning. The women are utterly bewildered by these new conditions of emancipation and are frightened of doing aught to offend the administrators of Soviet law; and as over and above they do not know how to dispose of money, never having had the fingering of it before, they often inquire of the coöper-

ative official whether they have the right to share with their menfolk the money just given them!

Among the other queer traditional canons of the Uzbeks of Turkmenistan was this, that an unmarried woman had no right to water or to land. When she married, her future husband had to present her father with fifty camels, and this offering conferred on him the right to draw water. But since 1926 the Soviet law endows the woman with a claim to water and land in her own right equal to that of her brothers. But as the division of the land is still made by the men, they take ten dessatines for themselves and give but half a dessatine to the woman. In some villages the men are so opposed to women's rights that they refuse to accord them even the half dessatine and leave them with nothing at all.

Against all these and other absurd survivals of olden times the Soviets have waged a bitter and not unsuccessful war. And the other backward nationalities no less than the Uzbeks have benefited by the new legislation: one and all they are being disciplined, brought within the pale of enlightenment, and qualified to see and judge things for themselves—a task on which much energy, time, and money have been spent.

The Uzbeks, Turkmen, Buryats, etc., are extreme cases. There are others which, without being so glaring, are hardly less difficult to deal with. Even the peoples of central Russia were sorely in need of discipline, schooling, tutelage, for their mental and moral state was deplorable. I described it many years ago when Czarism still seemed firmly rooted in the land. I then maintained that woman's social position is the keynote of a people's civilization; and in the Czarist Russia of the Twentieth Century it was abnormally low, being held down by antiquated prejudices and class abuses. Judged by this criterion the Russia of

the Twentieth Century stood but little if at all higher than that of the Eleventh, when Yaroslav the Great put women on a level with the blind, the lame, the mendicant poor, crippled, and deformed humanity. These views were countenanced by the Orthodox Russian Church, many of whose luminaries openly despised the fair sex. Orthodoxy was very chary of conferring on any pious females the distinction of saintship, and the people chimed in acquiescingly. Their proverbs reflect their brutal contempt of a woman. One of them runs thus: "A hen is not a bird, neither is a woman a human being." In the manuscript of a religious sectarian similar views are expressed with a simplicity and crudity that take one's breath away.

> Woman [it tells us] is the weakest creature, the receptacle of all woes, the red-hot coal of dissensions, the baneful toy, the enemy of the angels, an insatiable animal, an abyss of credulity, a bunch of obstinacy, vanity of vanities, an attraction in the distance, an angel in the street, a devil at home, a magpie at the gate, a she-goat in the garden.

Wife-beating has often been taken to be a sign of a genuine attachment, whereas in old Russian proverbial philosophy it figures mainly as a condition of the happiness of the husband. "He is not drunk who drinks not wine, nor is he happy who fails to beat his wife." Numerous concrete cases in which those harsh proverbial maxims were applied came under my own observation in Czarist times, when no married woman could leave her husband without his consent; and if stung to provocation she made a dash for liberty he could have a description of her published in the *Hue and Cry*. This usually led to her arrest, after which the vindictive spouse could have her dispatched to him on foot to wherever he cared to await her. I sometimes came across advertisements like the following:

We respectfully request all persons in authority to seek for and arrest our wives, the peasant women Daria Vyssotina and Agrippina Tarassenkoff, who went away from us, their husbands, on the 23d inst., without passports. Description: D. Vyssotina, 18 years, middle-sized, light hair, brown eyes, clean face. A. Taressenkoff, 19 years, of medium height, light-haired, clean face, *enceinte.*

I knew personally one vengeful husband who, to punish his rebellious helpmate, would travel systematically from one end of the country to the other, then demand his wife through the police, have her dispatched in that degrading way, and then begin again *da capo.*

Since then things have undergone a fundamental change. To-day woman is in every respect the equal of man, and, when nature aids, his superior. She is no longer dependent for passports or indeed for anything else on her male partner; she may quit him when she likes, and he has no power to constrain her to return; she need not assume his name or accept his nationality. She is fully enfranchised and can vote as a citizen, is eligible for all responsible posts in her village or town or in the party, and may take steps against her husband. The rôle assigned to woman in the destinies of Sovietdom is that of an understudy of Providence, watching over the Soviets, scenting out dangers that menace them, warding off obstacles, suggesting reforms, and generally cementing the various elements of the community into one harmonious mass.

Education was methodically restricted under the Czars, and many a clever suggestion was made to limit it still further. "Education," wrote one spokesman of the government of Alexander III, "should be proportionate to the property of those who are being educated,"[1] so that if a husband and wife had no property at all, as often happened, their children would not be entitled to any grade of instruc-

[1] Cf. *Modern Russia,* p. 12.

tion. An educational commission in the city of Saratoff during the reign of the same emperor reported strongly in favor of holding education in check "so as to protect the children of the wealthy classes from the influx into the schools of children of the poor and middle classes."[1] The education of girls in particular was woefully neglected, and the little that was accomplished in that line had its origin not in the solicitude of the authorities but in private initiative.

The heritage taken over by the Soviets was therefore exceedingly unpromising, but it has been rapidly improved to the full extent allowed by circumstances. Commissary Lunacharsky, who has devoted much of his time to this interesting work, stated in a discourse pronounced in the year 1928 that the percentage of uneducated males in Russia is eighteen, and of females fifty-three, and he added that if the percentage of uneducated women were to fall to the level of that of the men, Soviet Russia would forthwith take the sixth or seventh place in the world among educated peoples. As it is, there is no country in which the percentage of uneducated females, as compared with that of the males, is so high as in Soviet Russia. On the other side, the Russian women, when taken in hand, are much quicker to absorb instruction than the men. The women have already made a perceptible advance along educational lines, but to catch up with the other sex in this respect is uphill work. "Lenin," concluded Commissary Lunacharsky, "laid it down as an important principle that the number of educated women should be equal to that of the men, otherwise it would be impossible to establish socialism."

The Soviets then have conferred on women equal rights with men in all matters, social, political, etc.; but it is one thing to possess rights and quite another thing to know

[1] Cf. *Modern Russia*, p. 12.

how to use them. One of the hardest tasks for the authorities to-day, and in the near future, is to emancipate women from tradition and custom, "especially from the slavery of domestic work, the petty household tasks which make her useless for anything higher. It is not enough therefore for the Soviet authorities to endeavor to liberate woman; she herself must also have the will and the determination to contribute to her emancipation." Lunacharsky gave a striking instance of how much is being done toward enlightening the masses to-day. In the year 1913 the Czarist government, spending in that twelvemonth more on education than ever before, laid out in pre-war currency 276,000,000 roubles. In 1927 the Soviets' budget for education in the Republic was 396,000,000 pre-war roubles. This difference can be appreciated by the dullest apprehension.

We are officially assured that the emancipation of women to a considerable extent means

> . . . to free them from the drudgery which is laid upon them by their housework, the kitchen, and the necessity to serve their husbands and children. Regardless of the handicaps due to economic difficulties and to the lack of proper housing the reform of the home life of the women is visibly advancing. By way of dealing with the homework and the kitchen we have introduced large communal dining rooms. Of course this compared with the needs is still insignificant; but a five-year plan provides for the extension of the dining-room system throughout the whole Union. In the year 1928–1929, 29 large dining establishments were constructed at a cost of 21,000,000 roubles. . . . At present we have about 1,000 units serving 600,000 dinners every day, and 5 large steam kitchens in the great industrial centers, such as Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Rodniki, Nishny Novgorod, and Dnieprostroy. The Ivanovo-Voznesensk plant serves 18,000 dinners per day. The director of one of these establishments is a woman, and most of the personnel are also women. The Ivanovo-Voznesensk experiment shows the significance of these eating establishments in the struggle with alcoholism. During the past three years milk has been slowly replacing

beer. The Ivanovo-Voznesensk dining rooms now serve five times as much milk as beer. At present our problem is to organize society around these establishments through the agency of the women delegates from the factories and the mills. Thus the work of emancipating the women is carried on through the agency of the women themselves. They participate in the control of dining rooms, nurseries, children's homes, playgrounds, and in the entire cycle of institutions destined to contribute to the emancipation of women. . . .

The exertions of the Soviet government for the protection of motherhood and woman's work are well known. In no other country does any such legislation exist which in every respect safeguards the interests of the woman as mother and worker. To supervise the administration of this legislation is the task of the women themselves, and for this purpose they are engaged, in responsible positions, in the institutions for the protection of labor, motherhood, and infancy. Providing for equal rights in elections, certain advantages are, nevertheless, accorded to women. Their "eye" is present everywhere in the coöperatives, in which women are employed as members of the store committees to see to the proper operation of the coöperative stores, as well as of the departments of health and education; such measures as the provision of hot lunches in schools are due mainly to the initiative of women workers.[1]

One of the most effective ways in which women are made to realize their rights is their participation in industry and productive work. Statistics show that in these occupations their numbers have been growing every year. During the last few years the women occupied in industry have increased from 414,800 to 710,200, that is, 71 per cent. The largest number of women are found in the textile industry—192,000. The female members of the labor unions have also increased correspondingly. In October, 1923, there were 1,449,000 women members; in October, 1926, they had increased to 2,413,578. In Dagestan from January, 1926, to January, 1927, the number of local women engaged in industry increased from 437 to 688; in Uzbekstan from 600 in 1925 to 1,953 in 1926. In Tar-

[1]Cf. *Bulletin of Vox*, N. 9–10, 1929.

taria the labor unions have 3,550 women; in the Republic of Azerbeidjan there were 319,919 women engaged in industry in 1928. From 1924 to 1926, 675 women workers of Leningrad were promoted to be directors, assistants, and managers in industrial enterprises. In fifteen provinces during the first three months of 1927 four directors, seven assistant directors, and forty-five managers, were appointed in industrial enterprises. Among the railroad personnel, 1,224 women workers were promoted in 1925–1926 to the positions of controllers, station masters, etc. In the textile industry, not including Leningrad, 181 women workers were similarly promoted. In the industrial, economic, technical, and secondary schools there were 59 per cent. of women in 1928, and this year the percentage in technical and economic schools has increased still more.

And the Soviets are not merely endeavoring to educate women, they are trying to teach them how to bring up their children, to keep them clean, to give them suitable food, etc., and they have rigged out vast establishments where mothers can leave their little ones during their hours of work or tuition with the certainty that they will be well cared for. The women themselves feel how earnestly the authorities are endeavoring to improve their condition. Then, again, many women already burdened with large families, and others who are so poor that they cannot afford to rear children, appeal to the government for assistance in bringing about abortion, and this help also is bestowed upon them. At the same time, however, the government officials always make it clear to the workers how dangerous it is for them to apply, as has hitherto been their wont, to medicine women of an old type for assistance in childbirth. They ought, of course, they are told, to have a trained midwife. The Soviets are waging war against those women healers who are looked up to in the villages

as demi-witches. All over Russia they are still numerous and active. In Moscow one was recently caught who had her abode hard by the factories, and in the very center of the workers, many of whom had recourse to her help in childbirth or for abortion. Numbers of women and children were injured by her treatment, whereas she pocketed large sums of money for those "services." The Soviet authorities had her locked up and condemned to pay a heavy fine. "The treatment resorted to by these impostors is dangerous and harmful," they say, "and we are doing all we can to get rid of them. They are forbidden by law to ply their trade."

Speaking on the same subject, L. Kagan made the following interesting observation: "Women workers in Berlin," he said, "which has a population of 4,000,000, dispose of no more than four establishments in which the children of the poor are looked after during their mothers' working hours, whereas in the Red capital of Moscow we have 105 of these institutions. This shows how earnestly we are striving to ensure the welfare of our women workers. With us a woman in an interesting condition is given four months absolute rest from toil, and is supplied gratis during this whole period with food and sanitary assistance, whereas in the days of the capitalist régime the woman worker had to labor down to the very day of the birth of her child. And if she lacked resources she was unable to look after her own health or that of her offspring." The reform effected by the Soviets, be its motive good or bad, is far-reaching, beneficent, and well worthy of imitation.

Commissary Lunacharsky in another speech declared that, "In our estimation, workers are not mere mechanical instruments, they are also progressive human beings. They are the pioneers of our people, and should therefore be imbued with high Communistic ideals. That is why it is our

endeavor that the schools should build up out of the young men and women workers genuine citizens, active molders of the future."

"It is characteristic of Soviet Russia," he went on to say, "that we have 71 per cent. women teachers—a much higher percentage than that of male instructors. In educational establishments of the higher type the percentage of women teachers is 50 and in the pre-school class it is 97 per cent. Practically all the pre-school education in the country is in the hands of women. The percentage of women librarians is 64. For the adult uneducated population we have special schools, and in these the percentage of women teachers is 55. Among the professional class the percentage of women is low—1½ per cent.—that is to say, only 3 women professors for every 200 men professors. For laboratory and scientific work the percentage of women rises to 37—which for a backward country, where 53 per cent. of the women are uneducated, shows how marvelously rapid are the strides we are making toward progress.

"As regards clubs, my one regret is that they reckon with so few feminine workers. Here women could do more good than anywhere else. If, for instance, the management of a club were in their hands they would make it clean, orderly, attractive, and cozy, and would keep drunkenness, which ruins workers, and vice, from passing the threshold. Women, in my opinion, ought to take over the management of clubs, because the club is for our workers what the drawing room is for the capitalists. Rich men possess at home places for their amusement where they can rest. For all such purposes we here rely upon the club, where our workers may unbend, repose, and obtain the things which make up the amenities of life. At the head of the club there should be a proper hostess, a woman gifted with all the

womanly qualities—woman's refinement, woman's gentleness, woman's perfection—in a word. All this is especially needed because in our country home conditions at present are somber and trying, so that the workers and women who have no club to go to are compelled to resort to drunkenness or the streets when in search of recreation.

"Something must be given to the women of country districts as a substitute for the club. Recently in certain places, especially in the district of Nishny Novgorod, there was a great increase of sectarianism, simply because there was nothing in the way of relaxation for the women. They have absolutely nowhere to go when their work is done. They are alone, and therefore are glad to take refuge either at a sectarian meeting or in a church, in order to escape from the depressing atmosphere of their gray, dull abodes. Consequently we must provide them with cinemas, spectacles, and village clubs."

The Soviet authorities hold firmly that everybody—young, old, and middle-aged—has to learn. From this rule there is no exception. As soon as a child is born it must be taught how to use its hands, and when it is old enough must learn to read and write. Gray-haired, gray-bearded men, and women, young and old, must also be taught, because the Soviet Republics have to catch up with and outstrip their bourgeois neighbors; the spread of knowledge being the corner stone of their Socialist policy. Lenin said in 1920 that in no capitalist country is there the excellent material for working on which is so abundant in that of the Soviets. "We want all our workers, men and women, to help in the management of our land. *Every cook should know how to govern the country;* and if women were properly trained we could at one stroke, so to say, make our country ten times richer than it is." And toward the attainment of this end the part which woman can play

is enormous. Considering that one woman is chosen out of every ten to be a delegate and that every two months they move about the big towns lecturing, one can easily realize their far-reaching influence. A woman knows thoroughly and can state clearly and fully the needs of her village and point out the kind of assistance required for it. And these services rendered by them are among the most effective factors of the Revolution. It was not without reason that Lenin said, when the Soviet government was being established, that "it can move forward only when instead of hundreds of women scattered over all the Republics millions and millions will have joined in."

The physical side of women's education is likewise receiving all the attention it deserves. Young girls are being taught skating and ski-ing—recreations formerly reserved for the capitalist classes—and for this it appears that they must don trousers. At the beginning the male onlookers scoffed at them, but now it has become a habit, and the sport has taken such a hold on the people that on Sundays and holidays in winter the adult women workers go skating and ski-ing with the young population of their respective villages. At one of the Marxist factories a woman inquired of the officials whether it is true that it is wrong for proletarian women to paint their cheeks, rouge their lips, powder their faces, and use perfumes, as they were assured at the lectures. On receiving an affirmative reply she asked: "Why, then, is this lesson not impressed on the men, for it is they who want us to decorate ourselves?"

"What we need," declared Commissary Lunacharsky, "are healthy women, collectivist women, ingenious women who will assist us to build up a new existence."

Nobody outside the United Republics and few persons within their boundaries realize the value to the Soviets of the alliance with the women. It saved them more than once

from defeat and ruin. If in 1918 and 1919 women had turned their backs on the Soviet workers and become their enemies, the Revolution would never have triumphed. As one of themselves put it: "Not one female worker, not one peasant woman should ever forget the great and difficult rôle which women took upon themselves in the first years of our struggles. During the civil war when the flower of our manhood was fighting it was the women who kept the country alive. It was they who baked the bread, prepared the ammunition, transported all that was necessary for the soldiers, toiled in the factories—in a word, kept things going everywhere. All the mechanical work, so to say, was performed by them; but precisely because they were not educated they were not able to help in the counsels and the government of the country." I may repeat that when the campaign was going against the Soviets, the women donned military costumes, seized rifles, and fought bravely.

At present one woman out of every sixty-six has the right to attend the elections and have her vote recorded. The active women voters number only one third of the active men voters, owing partly to the circumstance that in many places the males keep their women from going to the polls. Hence fewer women are seen there than one expects. If we analyze the 1,540,000 members of the different governing organs, we find that for every forty-six men and women taken together there is one representative in all the Soviet organs. Seventy-five thousand women regularly occupied in factories and on farms have permanent posts in the governing departments. In all the Union there are 68,000,000 citizens who vote. The entire population being approximately 150,000,000, it follows that 92,000,000 are non-voters. According to some authorities[1] 44 per cent. of

[1]Cf. A. Enukidze, *Women in the Soviets* (in Russian), 1928.

these 92,000,000 are under the legal age (eighteen). In most of the Republics there are more women than men, for every 1,000 males there are 1,070 females.

At the last elections 19,338,564 women living in the country were qualified to vote—a formidable army; but out of these only 5,790,948 availed themselves of their right. The remainder failed to turn up at the polls. In the towns 6,000,000 women had the right to vote, and of these only 3,624,988 exercised it.

The Soviets admit that their ideal would be to make the two sexes equal in all things. They are checked, however, by the circumstance that owing to her physical organism woman must resign herself to her function of child-bearing. All that can be done is to alter the conditions of existence in such a way as to lighten her burden and lessen her worries about her offspring and her home. Once her child is born she will be freed from all household cares and able to toil like a man. "The more a woman is taken up with her little ones, home, etc.," they say, "the less fitted will she be to assist the Soviet government. There are millions of priceless services a woman could render to the State if only she had the education and the time."

To sum up: Women are the soul of the proletarian Soviets. They are the guardians of the children; the educators of the mothers; the preventers and healers of disease; the substitutes for families; the inspectors of the peasant's conditions, his work and his household; the indirect regulators of taxes in the country districts as well as in the towns; the distributors of books; the professional librarians; the organizers of clubs of which they will soon be the sole manageresses; the inspirers and editors of the disclosures in the *Wall News;* the inspectors of private houses, if there still be such a thing as a private house in the Soviet Union; the confidantes and mother confessors of the Red

army, with whose innermost thoughts they are familiar, and of the factory workers whom they feed and warm and watch over generally. In a word, they are in a politico-social sense of the term, from nurses to soldiers, all things to all men and women, and possibly in a few years' time their new creation, a modern woman "emancipated from household cares," and a new social system will emerge to crown their progress.

From the proletarian angle of vision this arrangement seems to be almost perfect. It is quite unique. Certainly nothing like it has ever before been recorded in human history on such a vast scale. There have been governments that were kept fairly well informed of what was going on in those circles which they feared, hated, or suspected, but there was always the possibility of misinformation or false appreciations. The Venetian Council of the Ten knew much of what was being compassed in secret—much but not all. Some of the other Italian republics had clumsier methods of their own for getting at the truth, and they never ascertained more than a fraction of the significant facts. The only organization that will bear a remote comparison with the Central Committee is the Order of the Jesuits. In that body the Superior General knows exactly what to think of each of his provincial superiors in every part of the world; but the matters that interest him and them are few, whereas in Sovietdom there are more than a hundred and fifty million individuals and countless interests. In the Union of the Soviets everything that characterizes an individual or a group is determined, sifted, demonstrated, classified. Nothing can escape the Argus eyes of the Central Committee. Rhadamanthus, on his judgment seat in the infernal regions, disposed of terrible but infallible ways of extorting the truth. The Soviet authorities can dispense with ungentle pressure, for every-

thing they want to know is already spread out before them, much as a strategic map might be unfolded before the commanding general on the eve of a battle. Everything that has been done of evil or of good, every blunder committed, every plan unfolded, every criticism uttered, every passing thought, if put into words, is there as are specimens in a museum. The Soviet Union found a satisfactory and elegant solution of the problem of minorities, and it is embodied in the numerous autonomous republics and territories, the very names of which are unknown to most foreigners. This division might, one would think, make it almost impossible to delve down deep enough in the regions of semiconsciousness to get at the facts. But on the contrary it has facilitated the task, thanks to the women who, not content with describing things and persons as they are, strive to reshape them after Lenin's ideal, are, in fact, refashioning the whole community; and if ever the close alliance between workers and peasants so ardently desired by Lenin is to be realized, it will surely be done by the women who have already accomplished so much.

Russia to-day is a grandiose Medea's caldron; a vast colony of human ants whose countless activities make one's head reel. What a distance she has traveled since October, 1918! What a deep and enduring dent her womankind are making in the world's history!

An unparalleled instance of the virtuosity of the G. P. U. and at the same time a tragi-comedy of palpitating interest is well worth recording here as a partial illustration of the omniscience of the Central government.

The overwhelming difficulty of stealing into Sovietdom unobserved has been demonstrated over and over again by the failure alike of feline and dashing attempts to cross the frontier without permission and, therefore, without the knowledge of the G. P. U. Shrewd emissaries of foreign

governments have essayed it, private individuals have undertaken it; but one and all they have encountered the same tragic fate. They might be likened to the unfortunate spouses of Bluebeard, who, disobeying his prohibition, ventured to pass the threshold of the forbidden room and were undone by their rashness. Even Ulysses himself who overreached the Cyclops Polyphemus and escaped from the cave of death might possibly have come to grief had he tried conclusions with the G. P. U. For the all-seeing eyes of Argus are vigilantly watching over Sovietdom—one sixth of the globe—night and day, and the hands of Briareus, which reach its farthermost confines, are ever waiting for the alarm to clutch and hold.

Into this monotonous list of foredoomed failures one exception was recently inserted. And it caused a considerable flutter. A high-minded, widely respected Russian writer and political leader—a man who would do credit to any party—was the modest hero. He had been editor in chief and proprietor of the most influential daily newspaper in the Ukraine, had made an enviable reputation for himself and his country in the Duma, and had bravely withstood the Bolshevists, as an officer in the army of Wrangel in 1920, and when defeat had become irreparable he, with difficulty, made good his flight to Sebastopol and to France. His first book[1] was a graphic description of his painful experiences during those calamitous times, including the loss of his favorite son. Three years later he published another very readable book depicting the last days of the Czardom, the rise and fall of the Kerensky administraton, and the appearance on the historic scene of the Bolshevists. In both works he proved himself a fair-minded historian, setting down the facts as they appeared to him, irrespective of the light which they might throw on this party or that. This

[1]Entitled *The Year 1920*. It was in Russian and was published in Sofia in 1922.

trait nettled some of his political associates and won for him the admiration of many of his political opponents, producing in the fullness of time certain amazing developments which we shall presently behold.

In the meanwhile he attracted much attention as a new Orpheus who had worked his way to the infernal regions. He crossed the guarded frontier. In the Soviet Republics he spent a whole winter, visiting Kieff—his native place—Moscow, and Leningrad, keeping his eyes wide open the while, without, however, noticing anything of importance, hardly anything indeed worth recording. None the less, he stood forth as the man who had been down *there*. He had proved a match for the wily Soviets. He had steered clear of the innumerable pitfalls and springes of the G. P. U., set all their cunning at naught, taken up his residence in their cities, and wandered about without detection for several months, returning home with flying colors. On one occasion his summing up of the new situation was meager and depressing. "The Russia of to-day," it ran, "is very like the pre-war Russia, only it has dropped some degreees lower in the scale. . . ."

The book entitled *The Three Capitals* (i. e., Kieff, Moscow, and Leningrad) appeared in Berlin in the year 1927, creating a genuine sensation. It was a simple and concise account of why the author had planned this extraordinary venture, seeking news of his son; how he had carried it out, what kind of individuals were his associates, to what order of motives they ascribed their readiness to coöperate with him—a most important point—by what means they contrived to pass the three-headed dog, Cerberus, what perils had threatened him and them, and by what devices they had dodged them. This story had broad gaps; but the author explained that it had to be told with reticences, as his generous friends who had risked so much to assist

him might be compromised or ruined were he to specify under their real names certain places, persons, and arrangements.

By way of training for his Odyssey he had spent six whole weeks not far from the Russian frontier, patiently growing his beard in order to pass himself off as a Jew, and accustoming himself to walk rapidly every day so as to be able later on to outrun the Soviet detectives and also to get inured to the cold. His beard grew apace, and within a month his face had changed its aspect, to his delight, and when he glanced tremulously at the mirror a rabbi or a fakir beamed out upon him. "I thought that I could not do better than disguise myself as an old Jew."

Gradually he changed his costume to match his beard. On one occasion a Jew penetrated to his retreat—a Jew who had known him when he was young. "Perceiving me he burst into tears. 'What has life made out of you!' he exclaimed. That remark made me feel very young and courageous."

During this period of preparation he struck up an acquaintance which soon became friendship with men who called themselves smugglers, assured him that they had widespread ramifications throughout the Soviet Union, and could take him anywhere and back in safety. It sounded like a Solomon's carpet, but he was convinced it was true. At last all was ready. "I had been told to be at a certain railway station of a certain city in a certain country on such and such a date by such an hour. There, sitting at a table, I should see a young man, dressed in a gray coat and hat—a handsome middle-aged looking individual. . . . I was to sit down beside him and after a while to ask him for a match." In such cautious terms did he feel bound to write so as not to expose his gallant comrades. "I arrived at the station and everything came to pass with absolute

exactness. . . ." The man who had sat at the table awaiting him said, "I will take the tickets for you." "I wanted to give him money, but he remarked, 'We shall make up our accounts at the end.' "

Our traveler was naturally interested to know whether his disguise was good; so much depended on that. His new acquaintance informed him that his make-up was very successful. "Am I like a Jew, then?" he insisted. His friend smiled, and replied, "Yes . . . well, from afar, you know." Then he and his new friends started toward the frontier. On they trudged, one behind the other, through the snow in the murk. At last they arrived at the trysting place and found nobody. "How long have we to wait?" he inquired. "Four hours," was the reply. Four hours in the darkness and cold! But they waited patiently, silently. The four hours passed and still nobody had come to meet them. Some mishap had occurred. Anyhow they had to wend back to their starting place. The smugglers expressed regret, but in their calling such slips and misses were common enough. Next night at ten they were about to move again when they were told that the men had come in. One of them, a jolly fellow, seemed a sort of Sadko, the Russian legendary hero. Ivan Ivanovitch was the name he went by. "I know who you are," he said. "We, of course, are smugglers. We'll take you where you want to go. Let's start! Have you a revolver?" "I showed him mine. 'That's good enough for a city,' he remarked. 'This big one is needed for our work.' " He made other important remarks which the author prudently declines to repeat lest he should jeopardize those who uttered them. They all became warm friends. At last they set out on their fateful expedition. They told him that if he encountered anyone he must retreat, fire, and get away from Soviet territory. In the gloaming, while the snow was falling fast, they passed the frontier. Then

they were met by a sleigh and were drawn through a forest, where they got lost, but in time found the road again. Their talk was now in whispers. The very horse fell silent, appearing to comprehend instinctively the need for quiet. Entering Russia, the writer felt as one entering the room of a person who is very ill. Is he alive? Has he already passed away? Soon I shall see. Addressing the driver of the sleigh he inquired whether the mooshiks were satisfied with their power. "Satisfied, indeed!" was the prompt retort. "Who is satisfied now? Only the Jews are happy!" "But you received the land of the squires!" "Land of the squires. The devil a rood! Look around!" They were just then passing a great property that had belonged to a wealthy landowner. There were no fences. Ivan Ivanovitch, turning to our author, explained, "They don't recognize fences here. That was a very fine estate before. Now it is Soviet property. There's nothing but loss everywhere. Only the miserable Jews gorge on it." "Well, but the peasants?" "They came out empty handed."

This was the first account the pilgrim heard of conditions in Sovietdom.

In the city of Kieff, of which every street was familiar to him, they foregathered in the house of Ivan Ivanovitch, where another new friend, Anton Antonovitch by name, put in his appearance. "Addressing me he remarked, 'I should never have recognized you.' 'Did we ever meet, then?' I inquired. 'Yes; but you, of course, have forgotten me in the kaleidoscope of persons whom you have seen. I remember you very well. I am myself from Kieff. Allow me to present you with the passport prepared for you. . . . By virtue of this document you occupy a fairly high post in a Soviet government office, and you are further delegated to visit various cities of the Soviet Republics, and the Sovietist authorities are commanded to render you

every assistance in their power.' " At the same time he received his new name. . . . Then Ivan Ivanovitch invited them all to table. During the meal they quaffed port wine, ate caviar, and the mind of our traveler began to unbend. He talked too freely, however, mentioning with unction the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolayevitch, General Wrangel, and others, anti-Bolshevists. Meanwhile his host accompanied these reminiscences with a humming that grew loud and louder always drowning the articulate sounds of the imprudent pilgrim. The author next asked him, "Are you an officer?" "Who else should I be? I love military service." "But however did you sink down to your present life?" "Smuggling is the noblest of all the callings penalized by law, and my wife loves it," was the answer.

After supper the traveler repaired to a very modest hotel. One day, walking about the streets of Kieff, his head full of imaginings as to detectives dodging his steps, his attention was riveted by his own name in large lettering at the window of a kiosk. His heart fluttered, but he soon saw that it was an advertisement of his book *Days,* that had just come out. He was amazed. The Soviets reprinted his memoirs! "If I were now to cry out here in the street who I am they would mob me. . . . I went to the kiosk and bought the book, paying for it 1.25 roubles." . . . An author who thus stealthily, with palpitating heart, buys his own book, is he not a fitting theme for caricature?

Our author, always tortured by the thought that he was being shadowed by detectives of the G. P. U., relied on his nimble feet to get out of their way, but do what he might he could not avoid them. In the tramway he fancied that a tall, robust fellow therein was on his track, but he soon found that he was mistaken. Then, although dead tired, he walked to a deserted street which he knew in order to see whether he would be followed. The street was quite

empty, and he walked along it, but before he had gone halfway he discerned an individual in a black overcoat behind him. He now turned up another street, but looking backward discovered the man in the black overcoat. After that he entered a shop, bought stamps, and went out again. The black coat now went over to his side of the street and took to following him. This meant that he was being shadowed. Entering a beer shop to verify his belief, he fell asleep, but on awakening noticed a man looking in at him through the glass door and vanishing. In the street they were lighting the lamps, but he could see the black overcoat with another black overcoat following him. For the further details of this psychological game one must go to the original.

At night he had recourse to his friend Anton Antonovitch, who somehow contrived to be always at his beck and call. "My opinion," said Anton Antonovitch, "is that you were being followed by common policemen. The coarseness of their work proclaims them. They don't belong to the G. P. U. Detectives of the G. P. U. work much more artistically. They would never let you know that they were after you. That is forbidden them. . . ."

But he was not to be quieted. He could detect men following him whithersoever he went, in church, in museums, the markets. He had the mania of persecution. He finally decided to dye his beard. He asked a barber to do it, but the barber, not possessing all the necessaries, advised him to go to a place opposite where things were done on a large scale. But he observed that the shop was closed and begged him to accept the job. The barber agreed and sent him to a druggist to buy henna. Then the work began. Figaro daubed and redaubed his client's mustache and beard, and then all of a sudden stopped and cried, "Go to the basin! To the basin! Now rub quickly. Ah! it's useless!" In a

mirror the victim caught a glimpse of himself and was horrified. His beard was red and green. He said to the barber: "This is terrible. Now I can't venture out into the streets. The street urchins will make fun of me for dyeing my beard." The barber sighed. "I'm afraid that's true, but I'll soon remedy it." He then got an ordinary pencil and began to rub each hair separately with the graphite. When he finished, the beard had turned lilac! There was no alternative now but to have it cut remorselessly. Accordingly he sacrificed both beard and mustache, and looked so like his old regenerate self again that the danger of being recognized was tremendous.

Within an hour he had to leave for Moscow. He first went to an information bureau to get the address of a friend in Moscow, and at this bureau he had a rendezvous with Anton Antonovitch, who was to accompany him to the capital. Although he arrived a whole hour earlier than the time fixed, there was his faithful friend already in the bureau. In spite of his beard being removed, Anton Antonovitch knew him at once. He said nothing but smiled cunningly. Our author sat down at a table and began to write. Anton Antonovitch came up behind him and, almost touching his shoulder, looked at what he was writing, and when they were going down the stairs said to him in a whisper, "You have done well. You look splendid. Now go ahead, and I will follow you." When they reached the street he said, "Go and walk for an hour. I shall get our tickets, and in an hour's time we will meet opposite the station." . . . He then goes on to recount his interesting adventures in Moscow and Leningrad.

When at last he had escaped all perils and was leaving Russia, Anton Antonovitch said to him: "We have helped you all we could. I shall be happy when I hear that you are really safely out of the country. I think you have become

convinced by this time that things in Russia are not as you had pictured them to yourself from afar. "Yes," replied the traveler, "everything is quite different. I thought I was going to a dead country. But I see a people awakened and mighty." "That's an impression that we have not hitherto been able to convey to the emigrants. Over there you have already buried Russia and coffined a living people, so to say." He smiled and then continued: "Yes, we have never yet been able to impress upon the emigrants the fact that Russia has arisen. Now we have a favor to ask of you collectively, so to say, on the part of the dead. Tell them over there that we are alive!" Then there was silence that marked the solemnity of the moment; it was broken only by the noise of the train as it glided toward the frontier. The traveler answered, "I will give them your message. But I cannot guarantee that they will believe me . . . for they all know that Russia is without a head." "But, tell me, do we resemble a dying people? Now at the beginning of the year 1926 do you see the things that you witnessed in the year 1920? Every day—as a people, as a nation, as a government—we are recovering from the blow which Socialism dealt us. Therefore we can wait quietly now for the hour which is inevitable. . . . There is no more Communism, there is but the silly chatter of people who themselves have been all-round failures. . . . Socialism will disappear, and we shall get nearer and nearer to the type of an ordinary government, but with a few unordinary traits. . . . The emigrants cry, 'Let us evolutionize Russia as soon as possible,' but now let me ask you, what would they do with this Russia if one fine day it fell to their lot to govern it? Eh? . . . Good-bye; now I must leave you to settle your own affairs. Don't forget us!" And with these words he parted from his friend, vanishing like a flash in the dark winter's night as mysteriously as he had appeared. . . .

On his safe return to his fellow exiles the adventurous pilgrim kept his word religiously, assuring his friends, political and social, that they still had a fatherland, that their brothers on the other side of the frontier were alive, active, and building up a mighty State, and that all things had changed fundamentally for the better. Of his own new friends in Sovietdom he showed himself superlatively considerate. When writing the story of his journey to the three capitals he was most careful to say nothing that could by any possibility be used as a clue to their identity. Nay, more, he went much farther, and sent them the proof sheets from which they could strike out any compromising passages that he might have overlooked.

And having been thus duly censored by the G. P. U. the book was brought out. The author's friends questioned him closely on the subject, and soon the mystery was cleared up. . . . It was the G. P. U. which had provided him with the "smugglers," the passport, the sleighs, and watched over his safety from the day of his arrival "at a certain railway station of a certain city of a certain country" until his final departure, the many dangers and obstacles being of its own creation!

Thus to the list of failures to slip over the frontier a fresh name must be added. Truly unmatched for cunning is the G. P. U.

CHAPTER IX

MUSEUMS

On my arrival in Leningrad my first care was to investigate the rumors to the effect that many pictures in the Hermitage had been removed and clandestinely disposed of by the "unjust stewards" of Bolshevism. In this question the entire civilized world is interested, and nobody more keenly than myself, who became familiar with every picture in the collection during my long stay in St. Petersburg. In the years 1879-1880 a fellow student who is still living had a dispute with me about the painter of a canvas catalogued as "of the school of Leonardo" which reproduced the traits of the Gioconda without being a replica. My chum, who like myself was a frequent visitor to the Hermitage, maintained that it was not a real Leonardo, whereas I held that it was. Gradually he came round to my view, and many years later I felt highly flattered to see it catalogued as a Leonardo. And now I was naturally most desirous of seeing it again.

In order to obtain the requisite facilities I called on the representative of the Central government in Leningrad, Commissary Salkind,[1] one of the most amiable, cultured, and obliging members of the present régime known to me. He at once telephoned to the museums and then told me I could study them thoroughly at my leisure, and might visit even those sections which were not permanently opened to the public. Of these facilities I made ample use,

[1] I sincerely regret that he has passed away since then.

spending days in the Hermitage and the museum of Alexander III, until I was so exhausted that I could hardly stand on my legs. I duly found all the great masterpieces before which I had stood in veneration when a student and a professor, and also many new ones that hung in private collections in those days. But among the pictures that were nowhere to be seen was that supposed Gioconda in which I was specially interested. What had become of them? Were they among the "stolen pictures"? I put the question and was assured that none had been abstracted. The disappearance of those about which I was questioning the officials was accounted for by their removal to another place, a sort of dim limbo where they might wait for better times, when museum space becomes more plentiful. For priceless pictures, as for mere men and women, space is very reduced in Leningrad and Moscow. According to experts' opinion, arrived at after a rigid investigation, they were not works of the masters themselves, but only of disciples, so that the old designation "school of Leonardo" was quite correct. There can be no doubt that many, perhaps most, of the canvases ascribed to Leonardo were painted by gifted pupils of his who bestowed on them a high degree of excellence, but less than that which the master himself would have conferred. I could of course glance at them, I was told, if that would give me satisfaction. I replied that it would give satisfaction, not only to me but to all those who might look to me for trustworthy information on the subject, and if I could speak or write as an eyewitness nothing more could be desired. I was then conducted to the dismal resting place of those dethroned paintings, some of which were once deemed worthy to hang side by side with immortal creations of the great wizards of the Renaissance because the efforts of both to suggest thoughts and emotions by clever subtle touches were so much alike and

so effective. There were the canvases lying in rows on the floor. While I stood and contemplated them in pensive silence the attendant lifted some of them up and held them so that I should get a good view of them. Yes, there was no doubt, there were the familiar pictures. "But why," I queried, "have they been disqualified for hanging? Are all those that are now on the walls authentic works of old masters?" "Yes; but that alone is not sufficient. The main reason why these have been shifted away here," I was told, "was the lack of space. The increase in the number of genuine old masters has been so enormous since the October Revolution that all the pictures had to be rigidly winnowed and wall-room given only to the most valuable. These here, not being included in this category, were transferred to where you now behold them." I looked mournfully at those upturned, blacklisted and debarred treasures, and recalled to mind the good old times when they, like thousands of the human beings who passed annually before them, were in exalted places. And now . . .

In truth, then, the Hermitage has not shrunk in extent or lost any of its treasures since the fall of the Empire. They are all safe and sound, and possibly more helpful to the general public to-day than ever before. On Sundays and holidays crowds of eager art worshippers, divided into numerous groups of about thirty visitors each from schools, clubs, and political associations all over the country, pilgrimage to the museum accompanied by masters or expert mistresses who explain to them in simple, clear, and expressive words how a picture should be intelligently viewed, or else familiarize them with the characteristics of an old master or a school. Hundreds of those children and adults travel from afar after having spent weeks or months in preparation for the great day of their acquaintanceship with the famous painters of Italy, Spain, Holland, and Ger-

many. On week days, however, the Leningrad galleries were mostly empty, at least during my visits, and looked somewhat neglected. Occasionally, however, I met country people there in their rough costumes and school children putting searching questions and uttering naïve criticisms of the old masters in a low tone of voice.

The ordinary entrance to the Hermitage in the Millionaya Street was closed during my stay in Leningrad, and the streets leading to it were turned into a series of chasms and pitfalls by working men. The temporary entrance was on the quay, which was swept by glacial winds. Inside, close to the door, the first thing that met my eye daily was a vast collection of rations laid out for the personnel of the museum: scores of plates with sandwiches, sausages, slices of ham, tongue, cheese, hard-boiled eggs, etc., all exposed in the passage near the offices. Those eatables, each portion of which is called a "payok" or share, represent part of the salary paid to the officials and may vary considerably in amount and kind, according to the abundance or insufficiency of the harvests. Glasses of hot tea, the national beverage, accompany the sandwiches and keep the body warm for a while. In one of the rooms typists were leisurely at work and officials were smoking cheap cigarettes.

The Hermitage is of late become justly famous for its unique collection of Scythian antiquities, classified, I had been told, not only for educational purposes, but also with an eye to artistic effect. Part of the marvelous relics of the past being wrought in gold, silver, and precious stones are kept in a number of tastefully made cases in a strong room constructed for safety with many ingenious precautions. These antiquities are not open to the public, which has to content itself with photographs and galvanoplastic reproductions. Through the friendly offices of Com-

missary Salkind I received special permission to view them at my leisure. The enchanting vision that unfolded itself before my eyes will remain fixed in my memory as one of the most wondrous and impressive experiences of my life. On the eve of my visit I had asked myself what I knew of the Scythians, and I had to admit that it was next to nothing. Not that I had overlooked or neglected the subject. Many years ago two of my Russian professors had taught me that the Scythians were the oldest representatives of the Slav race known to history, but that their language, religion, and habits of life were admittedly wrapped in mystery. As I doubted the correctness of the positive part of this opinion I was bereft even of a theory respecting them. To-day, thanks to the experts of the Hermitage, I think one can form a clear idea of the cultural growth of that mysterious people whose language and race are still problems for enterprising philologists and antiquarians.

When I first wandered at will over the steppes of the province of Kieff, in the year 1877, my curiosity was aroused by the hillocks that broke at long intervals the dreary sameness of those endless plains where sandstorms in summer and snowstorms in winter might well frighten away would-be human settlers. And yet there had been great hordes of nomads passing and repassing there in olden times and halting for a brief span, and then moving on, as is the wont of nomads, for those hillocks termed "koorgans" were known to be the handiwork of tribesmen who erected them in memory of their dead chieftains, together with whose bodies they usually buried their weapons and trinkets and even house utensils. Despite legal restrictions, anybody could open these mounds and dig out the contents. I was once asked to make excavations myself, but I declined. Bones were invariably found, and occasionally, but not always, terracotta vessels, and very rarely gold or silver

ornaments, because the mounds had been many times uncovered and plundered. During the last hundred years, on and off, some of these tumuli were opened by experts and officials, and the finds, which were many and sometimes important, were deposited here and there with no attempt at systematic arrangement. It was not until after the October Revolution that a thorough rearrangement on scientific lines of the contents of these and of Central Asiatic tumuli was attempted, nor indeed was it possible before.

It was a Herculean task. Most of the antiquities had been removed from Leningrad to Moscow to save them from the risks of war, others belonged to various museums or to private collections. All these materials had first to be brought together, then sifted methodically and correctly classified. It was not until 1920 that these treasures were transported from Moscow to Leningrad, and after that it took seven full years before the work of investigating and arranging was completed. The results are now visible in thirteen rooms, and offer a concrete picture of the cultural development of the great Scythian people who occupied central Asia up to the very border of China, and subsequently dwelt on the shores of the Black Sea, from the Bronze to the Iron Age, and down to the early centuries of Christianity. Archæologists of to-day hold that the tribes that flit thus shadow-like before our imagination were all members of the same vast family. The Greeks who resided among them and founded towns that prospered, and did a brisk trade generally, also took this view, conferred on them the collective name of Scythians, and designated as theirs the vast stretch of country that lies between the Carpathians and northern China, and also the shores of the Black Sea which had belonged to the Cimmerians until the Scythian invasion. The cultural remains

of the Scythians leave no doubt that their artistic temperament was the same from one extreme of that vast domain to the other. Their outlook upon life, their affection for animals, and in particular for the elk and the bear, and their invention of the special workmanship known as the animal style, mark them as a homogeneous race. The course of Scythia's progress from the Bronze to the Iron Age may be followed with ease in those thirteen rooms of the Hermitage. It is especially interesting to note the growth of the influence of Greek taste and workmanship on the barbarians whose coarse primitive efforts become slowly more and more refined until a moment arrived when they in turn reacted upon the Grecian culture bearers, producing a curious mixture of styles and a synthesis of national characteristics.

In those chambers one beholds the whole life history of the mysterious people that once overran two continents, drove out the aborigines, spread, grew relatively civilized, decayed, and passed away as mysteriously as they had arisen. The apartment in which the gold and silver ornaments are preserved is suggestive of the location of the treasures hidden away by Egyptian Pharaohs or described in fairy tales. When I had descended the steps and reached the metal gate through which one passes into the well-guarded apartment, a big book was produced and an entry made to the effect that my visit began at so many minutes past such and such an hour. I then had to write my name in the book; so too had the official deputed to accompany me, as well as his colleague who kept the keys but remained outside. Then the gate was opened, we two passed inside, and it was closed again. The official who held the keys then retired, leaving two others in charge of the book. No sooner had we entered the apartment than my companion touched a knob and a mysterious mellow light was shed on

the gold and silver ornaments in the artistic glass cases. The effect was magical. My sensations were indescribable. I seemed to be in a trance. The goldsmiths' work which hypnotized me is marked by a purity and intense fineness of expression, if one may use this term, which so far as I know has never been excelled.

I must have remained a long while in this fantastic retreat, for when my companion and I approached the exit the officials outside expressed their regret that they could not let us out, as the guardian of the keys, who alone is authorized to open and close the gate, had gone away for a time. We then went back, and I underwent the spell anew and resumed my study of the precious objects. Some twenty minutes passed before our liberator appeared. He then solemnly and interrogatively called out my name, to which I responded, and when he had convinced himself that the seals were intact I was allowed to recross the threshold of the apartment, and I again signed the book and was permitted to depart, with an impression which is one of the most delightful I have ever experienced.

The art treasures of Moscow had, like those of Leningrad, outgrown their housing, and competition for space there was even keener still. Spacious new museums will in consequence soon supplant the old ones. Already the architects are at work on them. My first visit in the new capital was to the famous Tretyakoff Gallery. I drove thither on a narrow, shaky old droshky drawn by a jaded hack, and as conveyances of any kind were hard to encounter I made an arrangement with the driver to meet me for the home journey after I should have allowed myself an hour and a half in the museum. But to my dismay the courtyard was so filled with visitors of all conditions and in various costumes, mostly unseasonable, that I failed to force my way even to the door. After a couple of attempts I withdrew,

nearly crushed to a jelly by the inrushing crowds. Somebody who noticed my disappointed look whispered: "What imp put it into your wise head, old boy, to come here on a Sunday of all days in the week?" I had forgotten it was Sunday, and now I had to pay for my oversight by walking all the way home. During the ensuing week I was in the museum several times, and I found it not indeed crowded but less empty than the Hermitage in Leningrad on a weekday. Interesting groups of earnest country people and children passed me, following their teachers or guides, who uttered their remarks in a gentle whisper. Once I listened to an analysis of one of the paintings, and I enjoyed it as much as the youthful audience, to whom it was addressed. The Tretyakoff Gallery is intact and has lost none of its former masterpieces. On the contrary, it has very many valuable additions. Instead of the four thousand pictures it contained under the Czardom it now has six thousand. I was told, however, that the government of the Ukraine Republic had demanded the return of a considerable number of pictures and antiquities which had been removed at various times from cities and mansions of the Ukraine. "And will the request be complied with?" I inquired. "Who knows?" was the reply. Since then I have been informed that the Central government in Moscow has refused to part with any important picture, but may discuss the return of other objects.

The Shtshookin Gallery was my next goal. Shtshookin was a wealthy Muscovite with artistic tastes and noble ambitions who successfully played the part of an intelligent and open-handed Mæcenas in the days of the Czardom, acquiring valuable foreign pictures and turning his spacious house into a private museum. His hospitality was typical of the most hospitable city in the world. When I chanced to pass through Moscow I was wont to lunch or

dine with him and wander leisurely from room to room viewing his unique collection of modern French masters, the artistic value of whose work he was one of the first to recognize. In those halcyon days when his house was his castle, so to say, S. I. Shtshookin threw it open to all likely persons who desired to inspect his collection, which was unmatched. He himself gave the French painter Matisse the order for the two remarkable creations which decorate the staircase. Claude Monet likewise contributed several masterpieces to this superb assortment. Gauguin and Van Gogh are also well represented. The owner used to take a special pride in the wonderful canvases of Monet, Gauguin, and Van Gogh. He told me once, and all Russia was aware of his generous intention, that he was bequeathing his collection to the city after his death. . . . The last time I was his guest at dinner Madame Scriabine, the wife of the celebrated composer, was there, and she kindly played to me some of the best pieces composed by her husband—then hardly known—interpreting them as I have never heard them interpreted since. As she was then preparing to visit England and interest people there in modern Russian music she unfolded her plan to me, the details of which we then discussed. And now, after those long years and the far-reaching changes they have brought in their train, I again stood here in the same apartment in which we three had spent that pleasant evening, and I cast a glance at the collection in its new environment. Scriabine's compositions are now familiar enough to the musical world, and his appreciative fellow countrymen have created a Scriabine Museum in Moscow, where his memory is perpetuated.

And Citizen Shtshookin? Before entering the territory of the Soviets I had asked many people what had befallen him, and the answers I received pointed to a tragedy. "Oh, he was imprisoned, I believe, or exiled or shot, I really for-

get which, but Moscow knows him no more." When in his museum I expressed my sympathy for the generous patron of art, and my regret that he had not been treated with greater consideration, and I inquired how he had really fared. I was assured in reply that he was still living somewhere, probably in a room of his old abode. "Can that be?" I asked. "Why not? Would you like to meet him? If so, it can be arranged." My heart fluttered at the anticipation, and I closed with the offer. But on second thoughts I altered my decision, feeling unwilling to subject the displumed and impoverished magnate to the trying ordeal of a personal interview. Afterward I learned, and this time there was no room left for doubt, that years ago S. I. Shtshookin had shaken the dust of Sovietdom from his shoes and fixed his domicile in France.

CHAPTER X

THEATERS, MUSIC, AND ART BOOKS

ABOUT the theaters in the Union little need be said. Their fame has spread to all corners of Europe and to all countries of the globe, and it only remains for me to remark that it is well deserved. In one theater in Moscow I saw a comedy which had already achieved widespread popularity. It had been forbidden by the authorities at first because of the scathing virulence with which the bribery and injustice frequently practised by petty officials were held up to the reprobation of the nation. But as this prohibition ran counter to the spirit of unmitigated self-criticism which characterizes every department of public life in Soviet Russia, *Zoe's Flat*—this was the title of the comedy—was permitted. It turns upon the scarcity of dwellings in the capital and on the new law limiting the number of square meters which an individual can occupy without paying thrice the ordinary rent. The People's Commissary examines Zoe's Flat with scrupulous care and conscientiousness, and is about to report that she must give up a room or two as she has far more space than she needs in her alleged capacity of dressmaker. In reality she is not a dressmaker at all, but a prominent member of the oldest and least reputable female profession in the world. When argument and suasion are seen to be vain the resourceful lady slips a bank note into the hand of the upright Commissary, whereupon the scale falls from his eyes and he discovers that she is well within the limits of the law. I was highly amused at

the satirical sallies of the playwright, and edified by the tolerance of the government.

It was impossible to sit through this curious piece, which in parts is far too tedious, and listen to the cynical gibbeting of corrupt officials, and to the bursts of applause from the delighted audience without receiving an instructive insight into the broad abyss between striving and realizing in the Union. But what struck me most of all there and everywhere was the open encouragement given by everybody, governors and governed, to all who could and would bring out the contrasts between the aim of the law giver and the disheartening lapses of the law enforcer. This appears to me one of the most hopeful signs of the situation. Wherever you go you find sharp criticism fearlessly expressed, committed to paper, and hung on the walls of every institution. I read it in the clubs of peasants, in the agricultural museum, etc. And the writers of these remarks call a spade a spade, never mincing their words or sparing their victims. Whatever displeases them or appears to be amiss is condemned in terms that are often unmeasured, and a speedy reform is called for. This trait is to my thinking a token of grace, of that saving grace which was so sorely needed and so sadly lacking. Anyone who feels disposed to arraign the Soviets anew before the tribunal of the world will find an arsenal of weapons, and a lexicon of pungent vituperation ready to hand in the press of Moscow, Leningrad, Kharkoff, and other towns which is unsparingly outspoken. In no other country have I encountered anything comparable to this unusual instrument of government, which is perhaps the most ingenious ever forged by its authors, whose aim is not art for art's sake, nor culture for itself, but all things for the spread of Marxism, and the suppression of every trace of capitalism.

The Soviets, once they were firmly in the saddle, dealt

ungently with the spectacular arts of the old régime. For a time indeed they had no choice but to tolerate plays and spectacles which they loathed as works of the arch enemy of the proletariat, but they did what they could to free the population without avoidable delay from the bourgeois contagion. Classical works, however, continued to hold their own for a long while after this until at last the new spirit embodied itself in dramas, comedies, and operas of very unequal merit which charitable or biased critics deemed worthy of public representation. But nothing that was inspired by ideas less sweeping and passionate than those of the October Revolution passed muster in those days of storm and stress, and every well-meaning effort to create something new and appropriate was warmly acclaimed. Soon playwrights, poets, and musicians, or aspirants who deemed themselves such, sprang up on every side; actors were hardly outnumbered by the spectators; and a mania for the spectacular arts taking possession of that part of the population which could read and write spread like wildfire throughout the land. In time workmen's clubs, which are countless, founded their own theaters, obtaining the help of experienced teachers whenever they could, but with or without such assistance they forged ahead audaciously. To-day some of those clubs possess for their theaters spacious buildings fitted with the latest technical innovations and nowise unworthy of a European city. The total number of club-theaters in the Soviet Union is well over 15,000, and they give employment to an army of energetic men, women, and young people. Leningrad owns more than 100, while the province of Moscow, with 2,300,000 inhabitants, maintains 1,500 dramatic circles. It is affirmed by specialists that many of the performances in those homely temples of art are truly excellent. As I beheld only rehearsals I am not qualified to pass judgment,

but bearing in mind the combination of enthusiasm and good taste that characterizes their general trend I am prepared to accept this favorable verdict. The capital itself is provided with thirty theaters which draw well over 3,000,000 spectators annually—a goodly number for a people whose staple industry is agriculture and whose esthetic needs are only just developing. The other day a list was made public of the pieces that attract most audiences, and it is worth noting that while the first place is occupied by the comedies of the Russian playwright Ostroffsky—whose son, now blind, was recently lying in misery and squalor in a shed in France—the second place is held by Shakespeare, the numbers being 1,000,000 and 376,000 respectively. The masterpieces of Sophocles were admired by 10,000 people, and those of Æschylus by 9,500. Sophocles and Æschylus entertaining the northern proletariat is in verity a sign of the times.

Thus in the Soviet Union the theater has become an integral element of the very soul of the people, and the rôle it plays in widening their intellectual and social horizon and fusing into one all sections of society can scarcely be exaggerated. From the outset the leaders of the Revolution gauged aright its influence as an instrument of culture and its practical value as a means of political propaganda, and they hastened to enlist drama, cinematograph, opera, music, folklore—in a word, all public entertainments and amusements into the national service. One and all they are now State interests. In the Union all forms of culture are employed as means of propagating Marxism. Under the fomenting hand of the State, and with the eager support of the public, the theater is become a bond of union among workmen and peasants and also among the various republics and minorities. This phenomenon is worth analyzing. Several of the lesser nations had no theater of their own before

the October Revolution, others amused themselves with childish imitations or dangerous substitutes. Then the peoples of the Ukraine, of Georgia, the Bashkirs, Jews, Uzbeks, and others reacted energetically to the impulse given by the State and astonished their masters by their achievements. The Jewish theater, whose directors were recently in Paris and Berlin, where they gave brilliant proofs of what they had accomplished, in a brief span of time have admittedly contributed to the success of the new movement in the Soviet Union.

An amusing detail is worth recording. It deals with the free and easy way in which the names of places and persons of famous dramas, not excepting Shakespeare's, are sometimes renationalized to suit the patriotic fancy of the newly born State. When *Hamlet* is played, say in Armenia, we no longer have the Prince of Denmark that Shakespeare knew, but a scion of the royal family of Armenia, and the names of the other *dramatis personæ* are likewise suitably transformed. This and other kindred concessions to the predilections of provincial audiences are consequences of the axiom laid down by scenic science—the most recent esthetic discipline defined and cultivated by the Soviets—that the limitations, wishes, and requirements of the audience have to be taken into account by those who provide the spectacles. So rigidly is this precept adhered to now that it is applied even to the scenic reproductions in children's theaters, and the youthful audiences are exhorted to record their impressions, to state what pleases them most, and to point out defects or suggest improvements in the staging, acting, or decorations. A few of these judgments are precocious and sound, others unripe and amusing; all are pregnant with interest and instruction to the adult and stimulating to the little ones themselves, who thus early begin to accustom themselves to observation, to use their critical

acumen, and to rely upon their own judgment. From the tenderest age the children are thus attuned to the rôle allotted to them by their Spartan guardians.

Working men in cities—one of the real nuclei of Sovietism—naturally form a privileged audience whose demands are hearkened to with respect and carried out with promptitude. Despite this constant appeal to the proletariat which, one might think, would operate as a drag, the refinement of scenic representation in Leningrad and Moscow is one of the most remarkable phenomena in art there. True, the first impulse was given before the October Revolution, but it is only fair to state that the Bolshevists have systematically encouraged the persevering exertions of the remodelers of dramatic representation and attained far-reaching results. The fine work accomplished by Stanislawsky, Meyerhold, Wakhtangoff, and other brilliant theater reformers in the Soviet Union, and partially exhibited in various European countries, stimulated competition and bore in upon the cultural world the international character of the theater and the need for its scientific treatment. It would, however, be a mistake to assert, as is sometimes done, that the initiative in the new scenic movement originated in Moscow or Leningrad. Before the Czardom had fallen the ball had been set rolling in France by the courageous M. Gémier, whose convincing experiments won numerous converts to his plea for an international theater. In the principal cities of Germany and other European countries, to which one may fairly add Japan, not only was the ground prepared for the new theatrical science, but its aims, methods, and relations to kindred sciences had already been outlined and a perceptible advance on the new lines had been made. During my stay in Moscow forty-six representatives of the Kabuki Theater Company of Japan, accompanied by the director, visited the Soviet

Union, as I remarked in another chapter, and were at great pains to explain what in their art might seem strange to the Muscovite reformers. These prophets from afar were applauded rapturously by their Slav audiences, and their success filled them with delight. The female characters of the plays were, as is usual in Japan and China, impersonated by men.

The movement reinforced from so many different sides soon crystallized, and to-day the Soviet Union boasts an Institute of Scenic Science. The functions of this body, which consists of fifteen members paid by the State, and forms a section of the Historical Art Institute of Leningrad, are the study of the spectacular arts, their conditions and limitations, of the mistakes committed in the past and the methods by which one may reconstruct the theater of a given historical period and define its relations to the entire cultural and economic life of the people. The institute is divided into five sections, dealing respectively with the theater of the East, with that of Europe and America, with the history of the Russian theater, with the theory of the new science, and with the study of "movies" and a comparison of their functions with those of the theater. The field of research thus widened is growing rapidly in extent with the years, and already it includes every public amusement, traditional and contemporary, and ancient customs at funerals, weddings, christenings, etc. The remarkable publications issued by some of those specialists give one a fair idea of their aims, methods, and results. In Leningrad they have created an experimental stage, where theatrical productions are set up, analyzed, discussed, and classified. One of the standing problems to which the closest attention is paid turns upon the reactions of the audience during the representation of a play and the worth of these reactions as criteria. It is most enlightening to watch the working of

this innovation and its influence on impresarios and playwrights. In a word, we are face to face with a wholly new set of sciences, the serious nature of which may be assessed by the fact that a complete university for the scientific study of art with four faculties, one thousand students, and a course of four years has already been evolved and established by the Soviet government. The Faculty of Theatrical Science numbers one hundred students now graduating, who in due time will receive posts throughout the Union as actors, singers, theater directors, lecturers, etc.

The praise due for the outcome of the new movement should not blind one to the motives of the Soviet rulers who have thus laid the foundations for what may be a higher conception of the functions of spectacular arts than that which predominated hitherto. They exert themselves thus intensely to canalize the chief cultural and economic forces of the age in order to force them into the narrow bed of Marxism and make Communists of the population, that being the Alpha and Omega of their ambition, their one *raison d'être*. These the real objects of the authorities may be inferred from a glance at the repertoire of the children's theater, which has already had a life history of ten years. The heroes chosen for the entertainment or instruction of the bairns are not taken from the fairy tales of western Europe or Russia. They are a body of rough-and-ready social workers after the hearts of Lenin and Marx. This aim, however prosaic and disappointing, incidentally obliges those who pursue it to apply scientific methods to various problems, to treat their own people as an integral part of humanity, to enrich the character of the individual and help to raise him to a higher moral level than that which he attained hitherto.

The holding capacity of every theater I visited was strained to the utmost every night without exception. Not

an empty seat was anywhere to be seen. The spectators, attired in every conceivable costume, listened with rapt attention to the play, withholding approval or dissatisfaction until the end of each act and then giving a loose rein to their emotions. In the big theaters it takes about twenty minutes for the audience to quit the building, and it is an edifying sight to note with what exemplary order this is effected. Half a dozen stalwarts are on the staircase shortly before the end of the performance. Joining hands they hold back the vast stream of submissive humanity for a brief moment, to allow some fifty persons about five minutes to pass through to the wardrobes. This process is repeated until everyone has gained the street. One night I arrived late at the theater, and according to rule I had to wait in the passage until the end of the overture, but the director, aware of my delicate state of health, kindly offered to pass me through. Accordingly he accompanied me to a spot where some twenty persons in the same plight as myself stood patiently waiting for the door to be thrown open. Turning to the attendant in charge he said that as I was in poor health he wished to have me passed through without further delay. The answer being satisfactory the director withdrew. Then the attendant turning to me exclaimed, "I dare not carry out his order. If I did, these people here who are waiting like yourself would kick up a tremendous rumpus, and there would be the devil to pay. I am puzzled what to do." I quieted the janitor by declining to accept the proffered favor and volunteering to stand in line with the others. Thus, at least in the theaters of Sovietdom, there is such perfect equality that even the director himself is powerless to confer a privilege.

"How does it happen," I once asked, "that all the theaters are filled every night in spite of the impecuniosity of the people?" "The fact is," I was told, "that they don't all

pay in full for their tickets. A club or a political group sometimes receives a considerable discount and even gratuitous admission." Still about 70 per cent. of the places are, I was informed, paid for by those who occupy them, and workmen's theaters, which were until a short while ago in receipt of a subvention, can now exist on the takings at the door.

Many intensely interesting data might be given of the work now being done or undertaken in Leningrad and Moscow by the pioneers in spectacular arts. It is in truth a fascinating subject. So too is Russian music in all its forms and all its stages of development. I was present at various concerts illustrating new theories or embodying fresh experiments, and I found them extremely stimulating. I heard several symphonies of Tschaikoffsky interpreted with what seemed to me complete understanding and a remarkable command of technique. Contemporary music of the newest school I also listened to but with much less enjoyment than to the old, and I fancy the general public must feel about it what I did, for there were many empty places at the time in the hall of the Conservatory of Music. On the other hand, it was an esthetic joy to drink in the soul-thrilling tones and the inspiring rhythm which the performers with liturgical fervor produce in orchestral harmony. Absolute subordination of each part to the whole; in a word, perfect combination, is the essence of their method. That was the secret of the triumph won by Russian actors and musicians throughout the world before the fall of the Czardom. Each artist having a definite part in the piece must play it at the right moment and with the exact stress required, neither more nor less. Musical proportion has to be observed at all costs. The triumph of a "star" at the expense of the ensemble is an abomination.

Hence no individual can fairly claim exceptional credit for the execution; he has to share it with his comrades. In short, it is a case of genuine coöperation.

And since the October Revolution these principles have been accentuated in practice and upheld by argument. Bolshevism joins issue with the bourgeoisie and stoutly denies that every decisive event in history is the work of some one commanding personality—a Julius Cæsar, a Cromwell, a Beethoven, a Darwin. The individual, say bourgeois Philistines, is the initiator, the creator, the hero, and him they duly worship. The masses are more or less negligible, nothing truly great ever proceeding from them. According to contemporary Soviet teachers this is rank heresy. The creative forces of history, the forces that meet and modify emergencies, do not radiate from prominent individuals, statesmen, monarchs, or soldiers on whom annalists confer the title of genius. These are only the ultimate fortuitous accidents in a long casual sequence. It is racial circumstance or racial character, of the anonymous action of which no heed is taken, that counts. "Social collectivity" is the Soviet term for this process, which, however, was described and analyzed long before Sovietism made its appearance. According to this theory every molding influence in history is the outcome of the energies of the whole community, each member of which contributes his share of creative will. This substitution of the masses for the individual, it is affirmed, will enable the former to avail themselves to the utmost of the benefits of their revolution.

Applied to music, the drama, the film, this substitution means that perfect ensemble to which Russians owed their successes in the past and owe their upgrowth in the present. But in the domain of orchestral music it seemed for a long while impossible to effect any change for the better. What could be expected from an organism of which the conduc-

tor was recognized as the commanding personality who imparted unity and rounded form to the execution of the performers? Here was a case which apparently defied all fruitful application of "social collectivity." But the Soviet artists, after many experiments, contrived in the year 1922 to form in Moscow an orchestra without a conductor, which publicly performed two symphonies of Beethoven and afterward several works of Rimsky-Korsakoff, Tschaikoffsky, and other Russian composers with unusual brilliancy and ensemble. These concerts became grandiose political manifestations, revolutionary triumphs, popular rejoicings, proletarian festivities. Seventy-five orchestral musicians, masters of their art, combined and created this unique instrument—an orchestra without a conductor—and executed without a flaw masterpieces of Wagner and Liszt in presence of an enraptured audience of more than a thousand persons. The seventy-five performers became, so to say, one and indivisible in continuous communion with their hearers. No conductor? Nay, there was, we are told, a conductor whose guidance could neither be overlooked nor belittled—the collective will of the seventy-five executants. One experienced in it the unparalleled synchronization of the instruments. The public was in raptures, a new era was proclaimed, and a new departure in performance—the mass symphony. Some of the sensations produced by this innovation are new, exquisite, indescribable.

One of the most highly prized undertakings of the Persimfans was the concerts it gave to the proletarian masses. The council of national commissaries was enchanted with the artistic interpretation given to various difficult works by the orchestra, and with the appreciative way in which the concert was listened to and applauded by the proletarians, and acting on a wise impulse it offered a subsidy of

ten thousand roubles to this orchestra, which received the barbaric name of "Persimfans,"[1] on condition that thirty concerts should be performed before a hall of proletarian hearers. The offer was closed with, the concerts drew immense numbers to the conservatory, and the audience was delighted and showed its emotion. The Persimfans acquainted the Moscow public with the compositions of a Leningrad musician named Schillinger who is the author of a symphony on the rise and progress of the October Revolution. The results are said to have exceeded the highest expectations and to have been so encouraging that within three years the Germans followed suit and gave a concert in Leipzig which aroused sharp opposition on the part of some critics but received strong approval from a small group of highly trained hearers. The executants in the Persimfans—mostly Hebrews—are all first-class performers, but this qualification is not sufficient to win for an outsider admission to the association. They have neither need nor desire to admit new members. Their concerts are frequented by audiences at once appreciative and capable of paying the high entrance money demanded whenever a ticket can be had for money, which is seldom. It has now become a difficult thing to get a ticket under any circumstances. And yet at the outset the members of the Persimfans had a hard struggle to keep their heads above water, and if the government had not hastened to their assistance in the nick of time they would probably have gone under. To-day they can command their own prices; but to their credit be it said that they often give free concerts to proletarian clubs and groups in private music halls, and generally strive to do what is expected of them as members of an important national institution.

[1]This, like so many other barbaric terms, is composed of the initial syllables of several words which mean first Symphonic ensemble [without a conductor].

There is another new composer who is perhaps more highly thought of than Schillinger. His name is Shostakovitch. His rhythmic combinations and intensity of tonality send many into raptures. Commissary Lunacharsky suggested to the Prussian Minister of Culture and Education an exchange of musicians of the two countries, so that in the Moscow conservatory a six weeks' course of lectures should be delivered by one of the most celebrated German composers, and at the same time a similar sequence should be held in Berlin by an eminent Russian musician.

The musical craze caught on a few years after the Revolution and spread like wildfire over the land. Every school, every institution, every profession began to have its musical entertainments. Some formed orchestras of their own and invited experts to give them instruction. Music circles and choral societies were multiplied. Workers' clubs possess their own opera sections which acquaint their hearers with the works of new composers. For example, the Leningrad textile and metal workers who established a name for themselves as proficient musical performers produced, with good results, Bershadski's *Stenka Razin* and Pototzki's *Outbreak*. Various clubs possess their own symphony orchestras which entertain their fellow workers with excellent concerts. The Red army too succumbed to the mania and has been cultivating music of various kinds for some time, especially symphonic and popular songs. It is amazing to note how readily the people absorb musical instruction. Some workers' clubs, now comparable to popular municipal high schools, teach ordinary workers the principles of choral and musical interpretations together with the basic features of the art of music. Here is a concrete example. In the year 1926 for the first time the metallurgists organized the various local choruses into one good chorus which produced twenty-four concerts in various

workers' clubs. In time the *Queen of Sheba* and *Faust* were given enormous applause. But the boldest thing they did was to reproduce Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony,* and according to all the critics present their success was unparalleled. Moscow is permeated with first-class music as is no other city in the world.

The peasants have Planitzky's choir, which is idolized by the workers' audiences of the capital. Then there is the famous choir of Russian songs of the Leningrad chapel, under the leadership of Klimoff, which is known and appreciated all over Europe. The government, conscious of its opportunity, is doing everything feasible to preserve the great Russian popular melodies. They equipped two scientific expeditions to the north for the purpose of collecting them, and garnered in very interesting results. The Ukrainian folk music is also being revived, with the assistance of the local authorities, and the ancient Ukrainian instruments are being played—kobzas or banduras,[1] they are called. The Ukrainians have their own composers who are said to be rising men. White Russian music closely resembles the Ukrainian, with a certain admixture of Russian and Polish elements. Cymbal playing is passionately cultivated in Minsk where there is a State choir. Then there are the mysterious, ubiquitous, musical gypsies who, under the favorable minority conditions prevalent in Sovietdom, have formed an association of their own known as the Gypsies' Union. It is a recognized fact that Russian town songs were largely influenced by those of gypsy origin. Moscow rejoices in an ethnographical choir by which the good old melodies of that nomad people are being revived in their purest form under the guidance of an ethnographic expert, Kroochinin by name. The Armenians too, whose

[1]The bandura is an instrument made of zinc, has fifty-five chords, and is believed to be a variation of the Italian lute.

music, like their race, differs considerably from that of the Russians, are making praiseworthy exertions to vie with their neighbors in musical culture. They are proud of their youthful composers who are said to be doing good work. Many years ago I was quite familiar with Armenian music, but I regret to say that I know very little of what has been done by that progressive people since the October Revolution. The Georgians are still farther removed than the Armenians from Western peoples by race, and by musical taste, but they are full of enterprise, courage, and inventiveness. When residing in the Caucasus many years ago I was acquainted with a well-to-do banker who was passionately fond of music and had received a musical education such as fell to the lot of few in those times. He played Beethoven and Mozart like a virtuoso and had, I believe, given concerts. Yet I have known that musician, despite his European education and his passion for the classics, to jump up from the piano as soon as the wild sounds of a shepherd's pipe reached his ears, to rush off to the hills and remain away for many hours. In Tiflis the Georgians have an opera which was once Russian and was celebrated all over the Czarist empire; they also maintain a conservatory where eminent musicians perform and teach, and they organize choirs. But the music of the Georgians, Abkhasians, Tshetshemians, Ossetes is hardly ever appreciated by Westerners owing to what might be termed its monotony and roughness. The Tshuvashes and Bashkirs have also a vast repertory of songs which are now being methodically studied, but they are all characterized by a peculiar scale. A poet named Zatayevitch wandering leisurely across the Kirghiz steppes collected two thousand songs of which he has published the half. Some of them are described as sweet and tuneful, and one critic writes that they "stand on such a high level as regards melody

and rhythm that we know but few of the greatest composers in Europe who are capable of rising to such heights." That is indeed high praise.

In a word, the numerous races and tribes who live under the Sovietists are musical to a degree that is certainly not realized by foreigners, and the music they compose or enjoy is on the whole refined and delightful. There is music in every guild, club, workers' association, and in every village and hamlet, and the collective cultivation of that art is one of the most effective means of cementing the heterogeneous elements of the population.

Summing up my own impressions—those of a mere layman—I must admit that they were most favorable. When I attended the Persimfans' concerts I could not discern the need for a conductor in an orchestra whose execution was so faultless. I also heard various concerts consisting of the very latest developments of the "new music" which is not precisely proletarian. In one of them, composed by a rising master, Mossoloff by name, the piano plays an important—nay, the most important—part of all the instruments.

While reviewing the achievements of the Soviets in the sphere of art I feel tempted to say a few words about their feats in the kindred domain of art publications. Here too they have wrought wonders which the cultured world has already registered and eulogized. They have issued a large number of illustrated works which would do credit to the foremost German, British, or French firms and are distinctly superior to books of the same categories published in other Continental countries. I had seen many of them at the Cologne Exhibition in 1928, where they attracted widespread attention and scored a brilliant success. Naturally, when in the Soviet Union I felt a keen interest in this branch of the industry and took special pains to

satisfy my curiosity. The number as well as the execution of the books I saw is calculated to challenge the admiration of the visitor who imagines that all the energy of the present governors of the proletarian Republics is wasted or fructified in preparations for revolutions abroad or civil war at home. I acquired several of those illustrated editions which would gladden the heart of Grolier himself, were he to rise from the dead and superintend the bindings; but unfortunately most of the best works had been sold soon after their appearance and they are no longer to be had. This is not the place to enlarge upon the splendid woodcuts and other illustrations which impart to many of the publications a high extrinsic value and account for their quick sale.

The illustrators constitute a whole galaxy of artists, some already celebrated, others hardly known before. The name of one of the most authorized representatives of the new impressionism in graphic art, a genuine painter-engraver and the pride of the Sovietist Republics, is Vadim Falileeff. Of Tartar extraction, at the age of five he became acquainted in his remote home with a number of painters sent to decorate a church in the neighborhood. They painted a portrait of his mother; and he, hearing that canvas was used for the purpose, cut out a piece of a pillowcase and executed an image of Jesus in oils on it. After many ups and downs he entered the Academy, where he caused a hubbub by his audacious impressionism. He afterward studied the old Italian engravings of the Sixteenth Century and Venetian masterpieces of the Eighteenth, especially those of Zanetti. For colorings he analyzed Japanese productions. To-day he is unmatched in colored engraving. During his first period under the influence of Japanese coloring he burst all bonds and ignored all measure for a while. But

even then his unreal creations were noteworthy for their poetic tonality.

This man lectured for a time with zeal and delight to the children of the proletariat.

> I am thoroughly convinced [he said] that at the present moment, when art is bound to give to those who thirst for it all that it can possibly afford, it will do this through the medium of graphic art and engraving in books more easily than it could by means of painting and of sculpture.

A selection of Falileeff's engravings, characteristic of various periods of his career, has been published by the State Press under the indefatigable director Khalatoff. The work has been got up in a superb style worthy of the importance which is ascribed to its subject.

The October Revolution is believed by its champions and propagandists to have democratized art, bringing it down from the aristocratic heights of unregenerate days and rendering it accessible to all in the form of graphic art, which is one of the great achievements of Sovietism. The masters of this branch, we are assured, form a brilliant constellation, and their works would justify an exhibition by their number and quality. I have before me a biographical sketch of nine of them, together with splendidly executed specimens of their work, which justify a high opinion of what has already been achieved and grounded anticipations of what may still be accomplished.

One of the most interesting and characteristic personalities among that pleiad of Sovietist artists is Abram Tchekhonin. Superlatively versatile, he scattered charming vignettes about in abundance, wrought things beautiful in enamel and china, was a jeweler, a designer of heraldry, and a champion of Czardom who had nothing in common with Sovietism and very much that was incompatible with it, so

incompatible indeed that when in 1918 he suddenly shook off his monarchical proclivities and announced his conversion to the doctrines of the revolutionary party, few members of that body believed him to be sincere. Accordingly he was viewed with deep suspicion and isolated for a period of probation. But he made it quite clear that his change of allegiance was no mere blind, no indirect life insurance, but a complete inner transformation which fundamentally altered his outlook on things generally. In the words of his biographer, he "removed the imperial emblems from his beloved Alexandrine empire, substituting the emblem of the hammer and sickle." One weighty consideration in his favor was that he threw in his lot with the Soviets before they had achieved victory; while they were still struggling, uncertain of the future, he became one of them. Renouncing Czarism and all its works, Tchekhonin was a clarion to the revolutionaries, prophesying triumphs and calling the masses to intenser life and to victorious battle. This distinguished artist uses the brush as nobody else has yet done, combining its strokes with those of the pen, bestrewing the paper with elaborate designs free from romanticism and feminism. One of his maxims is measure. *Ne quid nimis.* He is endowed in a rare degree with a sense of the powers of the brush, with which he can work marvels, and he is equally gifted with a lively sense of his materials, which is brought out to perfection in the second groups of his creations, ceramics, and more especially in his porcelain productions, to which he has devoted a considerable part of his time and effort. In the biographical sketch alluded to dealing with Tchekhonin's life work his triumphs in art are described and illustrated with characteristic elegance.

Another commanding figure in the gallery of contemporary Russian graphic art is, as one might expect from

the Soviet republics, a lady. Ostronmova Lebedeva is her name, a name now associated with the finest engraving on wood of which Soviet Russia can boast. In this branch Lebedeva has attained high pictorial expression without sacrificing her originality or adopting any of the current "tendencies." Charmed and inspired by Japanese art, she never became an imitator nor did she owe allegiance to any school. She found much to admire among impressionists but was never one of their disciples. Although her special work was wood engraving she has also achieved high distinction as a portraitist, and some of her aquarelles likewise bear witness to her originality and versatility. The best connoisseurs of graphic art have bestowed on citizen Lebedeva's productions the much-coveted title of classic. The biographical work mentioned above, describing the career and reproducing some of the works of this gifted lady, who is still active, deserves high praise.

A monumental volume printed in the year 1928 contains rich materials in letterpress and illustrations for the history of graphic art in Sovietdom. It is entitled *The Masters of Contemporary Graphic Art* and is a fine specimen of what such a book should be.

A curious volume which deserves special laudatory mention by reason of the subject and delicately colored illustrations, is entitled, *Wat Tyler, A Poem.* Wat Tyler and the masses of the Soviet Republics! What have they in common? Their impatience of tyranny, their passionate desire to shake off the shackles of tradition and to head for the future. Still, it is a curious phenomenon of the Twentieth Century. The volume devoted to the works of Vataghin also does great credit to the State Press for artistic execution. So too do the drawings of M. Dobujinsky and the splendid reproduction of the works of the painter Kustodieff, whom I knew long ago when he was a favorite

with the champions of Russian orthodoxy and tradition. Then there is a volume of nearly seven hundred pages—most interesting pages they are—containing an illustrated history of the Little Theater in Moscow during the last hundred years, 1824–1924. The peoples of western Europe would be amazed could they fully realize the number and variety of the ventures into which the Soviets have launched out in branches of art which seem so far removed from their better known activities.

Passing all these phenomena rapidly in review, if one were ignorant of recent Russian history one might well ask whether the organizers were not a staff of professional culture bearers, whose sole task was to educate, to spiritualize the masses. It is certainly most unlike what are assumed to be the ordinary cares of a proletarian State.

In all the important actions of the Soviet authorities, political or social, one can always discern a cultural undercurrent. They are working for the remote future, preparing for a triumph which they themselves will never behold. Nothing that they undertake is planned for its own sake—everything is for Marxism, for Communism, with which the new generation is being systematically imbued, that new generation—the salt of the earth—whose rôle is to be apostolic. But in spite of their realism, which often savors of the machine, they cannot set their hands to anything, literary or artistic, without opening up some new source of culture. The reproductions in black and white or in colors of the best works of eminent Russian painters, and the execution of the masterpieces of Beethoven and Wagner by orchestras without a conductor, are conceived in a spirit much broader than is compatible with any mere political mission and incidentally mirrors forth a fine perception of the congruities. That was one of my unexpected discoveries in Soviet Russia.

CHAPTER XI

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

THE administration of even-handed justice to every citizen, poor and rich alike, is the ideal pursued by all cultural States and hitherto attained by none. A group of multimillionaires in the Great Democracy in the West is reported to be writing a book to prove that their country alone has been entirely successful in the pursuit. And yet it sometimes seems that if it were possible to fence off the air, as they have fenced off the land, it would have had its legitimate owners long ago, as the land has. In some countries the law shields more injustice than it punishes, and one statute chastises the offense that another occasions. However this may be, it is certain that wise legislation by itself, even though framed by a Solon or a Lycurgus, is powerless to achieve the task. Theory is one thing and practice another. In Czarist Russia an amusing case used to cause cynics and satirists to chuckle when the Russian Juvenal, Shtshedreen Saltykoff, flourished and wrote. A French writer was invited by a wealthy Russian nobleman to spend a few weeks with him on his estate. The enthusiastic young Frenchman on his arrival plied with countless questions his hospitable host, who took obvious pleasure in posing as a Czarlet, monarch of all he surveyed. Asked what the status of the mooshik really was in Russia, he gave a true account of it, boasting of his own lawless deeds. "What! You actually flog the peasants? For what kind of offense?" "Well, that depends on me. I can do it

for any offense or for none, just as the whim takes me. I can go much farther. It is open to me to have any of those men you see working on my estate arrested, imprisoned, flogged, fined, or even sent off to Siberia without trial or accusation, and nobody may call me to account." "*Nom de Dieu!* But have you no laws at all, then, here?" "Laws, did you say? I should think we had. Laws indeed! Cast a glance, monsieur, on those unwieldy volumes on the shelves over there. Volumes in folio. Do you see them? Those are some of our laws. Only some. I can show you more. Would you care to see them?" But the perplexed foreigner, looking askance at the books, and then eyeing his almighty host, fell silent. Further questions had lost their actuality.

Statute law in Russia was never much respected, and justice, like happiness, was no more than a word. The Bolshevists are perfectly right, therefore, to look upon their legislation as provisional. Law giving by the Revolutionists was begun before they were firmly seated in the saddle, and for that reason it smacked from the very outset of the retort uncourteous. Whenever possible it has been fashioned into a defiant reversal of the laws of capitalism. Thus, unlike the capitalists, the Bolshevists pass over in silence those fundamental rights of men which are so impressively laid down in the solemn phraseology of the codes of other peoples, and their rubric is worthily occupied by the concise decree that the exploitation of human beings by human beings is abolished. After all, that too is an achievement to be proud of. As some of the Republics are sovereign and independent they possess and exercise their right to issue laws for their own people; always, however, keeping within the broad limits drawn or prescribed by the Federal Treaty of the year 1923. Thus Armenia makes its own laws, Georgia does the same, the German Volga Republic like-

wise legislates for its own people, and so on; but care has to be taken that the spirit of these statutes shall not run counter to the general trend of Sovietism. Moreover, the Central government, which when feasible withdraws to the background like a nurse teaching a child to walk, and allows the sister Republics to exercise their sovereignty in their own hands; for example, the regulation of foreign and internal trade and commerce. On the other hand, the educational laws of the Ukrainian and the German Volga Republics differ from those of the Russian Republic, and some have codified and uncodified laws of their own. For example, in Azerbeidjan the marriage, family, and guardian laws form a supplement of the civil code, whereas in the other Republics they constitute a separate code. The Ukrainian family statute and the White Russian also differ in many respects from that of the Russian Republic.

The mechanism of the Soviet Federation by which these matters were settled may be briefly sketched as follows: The Soviet constitution set up a Council of Nationalities consisting of an equal number of representatives from each of the republics of the Union and from the lesser autonomous republics. Thus thirty-nine political bodies are represented in that council, of which only four are Russian, whereas the Russians form an absolute majority of the total population. This Council of Nationalities enjoys exactly the same prerogatives as the Union Council, which is elected by the All Union Soviet Congress, and the approval of both is necessary before a bill can become law.

Marriage under Czarism was, as we saw, a purely religious rite from which, however, by enactment of the legislature, far-reaching civil consequences flowed. Naturally the State took particular care to see that the precepts of the Orthodox Church with which it identified itself were not transgressed, and it left the other denominations

to follow or ignore its example. As a matter of fact each religious community dealt with the contract of marriage, the obstacles to its dissolution, etc., according to its own particular canons; but the problems of the children, their education, their right of inheritance, their guardians, etc., were settled exclusively by the civil code. For marriage was the groundwork of the family, of which it recognized the husband as the head. Hence the wife, invariably last, lost her nationality and became a subject of the State to which her helpmate belonged. She also forfeited her name and was known thenceforth by his, and on him was conferred the right to decide where they should have their domicile; and thither she was bound to accompany or follow him as he wished. He in turn was obliged to maintain her.

Under the rule of the Czars the children were classed as legitimate and illegitimate, mainly for the purpose of inheriting property. The latter had no rights whatever, while the former continued subject to parental authority even after their majority. Thus they required the assent of their father and mother, or the surviving parent, for marriage. This code was to have been modified in 1905, and a substitute was actually drafted by a special commission which had been working at it for many years, but political events hindered it from becoming law.

The Soviets made brief work of all that in the year 1917 by a decree entitled, "Concerning the Separation of the Church from the State and of the School from the Church," which dealt a stunning blow to the influence of the Church over the minds and solemn acts of workers and peasants, and inaugurated a new social era in the Union. Nor was this all: children born out of wedlock were declared to have exactly the same rights as children born of persons legally wed, and marriage ceased to be

what it had been heretofore—the nucleus of the family, just as the family is no longer regarded as the lowest social unit in the State. Thenceforth the groundwork of the actual family consisted of married or unmarried and children. Wedlock as such therefore establishes no relationship unless there is also actual progeniture. It is no longer marital union that originates relationship, it is procreation and parturition. None the less, marriage, which is recognized as the community of man and wife, if it result in children may and does establish familiar relationship between parents and offspring. But it is absolutely necessary that the latter be unquestionably children of the marriage. This condition, however, is never taken for granted as in most European States, where children born in wedlock or within due time afterward are reputed to be descended from both the spouses. Moreover, in the Soviet State descent may be logically challenged at any time, even long after the birth, by the mother, her husband, or third parties. Furthermore several fathers may be ascribed to the child and each of them, if recognized by a court of law, would thereby contract responsibility for its maintenance and may be called on years after to maintain or assist his reputed offspring. This constant menace to their meager earnings was protested against as intolerable by the rural population, among whom it gave rise to grave abuses. For example, a woman would suddenly make a declaration that her two-year-old boy had several fathers instead of only one, and the consequence would be that the responsibility of the real father would be lessened and the other reputed male parents would have to accept or repudiate the allegation, and mayhap travel hundreds of miles for the purpose of taking up the challenge before the proper tribunal. Another defect of the law was the lifelong duration of all these liabilities. Then again the registry offices where marriages could be

contracted were too few, and the resources of the Treasury too meager to permit the authorities to increase the number sufficiently to satisfy the needs of the population.

Against all these and various other flaws numerous complaints were formulated and redress was called for as is the custom of Sovietdom, where sharp criticism of statutes and abuses is encouraged and hearkened to. And various commissions of jurists were created for the purpose of reporting on the subject and making practical suggestions. They soon performed their task and drafted a new project which the government referred for study to the rural councils, and for discussion to the populations of the various republics, and especially to the women, whose argus eyes and sense of the feasible were of incalculable assistance. It was owing to their insistence that the age of both candidates for marriage was made the same—eighteen years—for bride and bridegroom. The results of this appeal to the population were valuable, and a new law was promulgated on New Year's Day of 1927.

Among the changes introduced by the reformed code dealing with family relations that which makes marriage wholly independent of registry offices is undoubtedly one of the most important. According to the code of 1917 it was the registration of the union before a qualified official that constituted the nuptial tie. From the year 1927 on the registry offices no longer play this important part. They merely accept the announcement of the two parties and file it for their behoof and for that of the State; but wedlock is the effect of the agreement of the two parties to it. Marriage thus is the affair not of the Church, nor even of the State, but of the two persons who feel drawn toward each other by sentiment or calculation and wish to cohabit. The State, if appealed to, is willing to take cognizance of the union, not for the purpose of giving it sanction, but

solely for the convenience of the parties and in order to enable them to prove the fact should this ever become necessary.

Article 3 reads:

> Persons whose relations towards each other are those of wedlock, unregistered in the prescribed manner, have the right at any time to make known their relationship by means of registration, stating at the same time since when they have been cohabiting. If a citizen of Soviet Russia and a foreigner marry, they retain their respective nationalities. As regards their names, it is open to them to keep their names or to adopt that of the wife or of the husband. In the Ukraine republic they may fuse both names into a double appellation and use that. But whatever name they assume before the registrar, that they must keep as long as the marriage lasts. When it is dissolved the choice of names is again left to the parties themselves, and if they have no preference the names by which they were known before their marriage will be given them.

One of the curious effects of the marriage, say of an English girl and a Soviet citizen, is her loss of British nationality, and her consequent loss of all nationality, seeing that she does not acquire that of her husband. The married parties are free to choose their occupations and residences independently of each other, the wife not being forced to live in the same domicile as her husband. They maintain the property they possessed before wedlock, but must divide whatever they earn during their married existence. To persons whose union has not been registered, and who have lived merely in marital relations, the same laws, accompanied by the same civil effects, are applicable. When there has been no registration, the marriage can be proven by the fact that the parties cohabitated, had a common household, or announced or admitted their relations to a third party in private letters or spoken words, or if either provided the other with financial assistance,

or if they both brought up children together. Husband and wife can enter into any kind of property relations allowed by the law with each other, unless they be deemed harmful to either of the two. If one of the spouses be necessitous in consequence of inability to work, the other is bound to supply the needful means, always assuming that the person thus liable be judged by a tribunal to be also able to afford the assistance. Liability to provide this help lasts, according to the new code, as long as the inability but not longer than one year. The right of an indigent person thus to receive assistance from his or her partner continues after the dissolution of the marriage, and lasts as long as the duration of the inability, but not in any case longer than a year after the end of the marriage, and if the cause of the need be unemployment the liability ceases after six months. The amount which the solvent partner is liable to contribute has to be fixed by a tribunal and must not exceed the amount of the social insurance. These liabilities have the same force for those couples who have merely cohabited without registration.

Marriage is dissolved not only by death but also by mutual agreement or by the will of either of the two parties; and if they should make a declaration to this effect they must at the same time choose their future names and come to an arrangement about the maintenance and upbringing of the children. With the object of safeguarding the interests of the offspring, the mother is authorized by the new code, during her period of pregnancy or after the birth of the child, to make a declaration respecting its father to the local office of the Civil Statutes Act, setting forth the name, patronymic, surname, and domicile of the child's father. The man thus designated is duly informed of this declaration, and if within a month from the date on which he receives it he has put in no demurrer his name is entered

as the father. But during the term of twelve months from the date on which he has received the declaration he may initiate a process against the mother of the child for wrongful statement. It sometimes happens that the woman names not her husband but several lovers, and by the statute of 1917 they were all, as we saw, made liable for the maintenance of the child. By the new statute of 1927 only one is selected by the tribunal; and as the interests of the child come before all others, the most solvent sinner of the lot is fixed upon.

Before touching upon the unsavory subject of sexual aberrations, and the ways in which the Soviet government is now striving to deal with them, it may not be amiss to point out that the lawgivers have been held up to universal reprobation for their daring innovations. Before forming a judgment on the subject I endeavored to look, were it only for a moment, eye to eye with the members of those commissions, and instead of blaming or praising to understand their motives. And this is what I found: They accepted the mission to reform the laws with a keen sense of the obligations it imposed, and they began the work, as is the wont of the Sovietists, with the analysis and classification of a mass of materials in the hope of finding helpful clues there. These materials had been collected and sifted by the Moscow cabinet[1]; which had carefully studied the personalities of sexual criminals and the degrees of their criminality and its causes. They also had detailed scientific reports made by provincial tribunals and by the Institute of Juridico-Psychiatric Experts. And all those data were utilized from the point of view of sociology and customary law on the one hand and from that of psychopathology on the other hand. The ideal they pursued in their task was the development of types of individuals for whom

[1]Not a political cabinet, which does not exist in Sovietdom.

the sexual functions should no longer play the part of one of the principal objects of existence, but should sink to their proper place as nature's method of reproduction, and the superfluous energy so often wasted in sensuous pleasures should be transformed into intellectual and social forces to be used for the benefit of the entire community. The legislators may have been mistaken, and their work may be harmful instead of helpful, but at any rate one must give them credit for the highest motives and for having taken advantage of all the means of enlightenment available. The penal code of Czarism classified sexual offenses as immoral and punished them as such. The Bolshevists deny the right of capitalist States thus to place the matter on such high ground, seeing that slavery of various kinds, including sexual serfdom, characterizes all those States and makes their claim to the rôle of defenders of morality ridiculous.

The Soviets hold the view that the domain of morality is the least subject to the influence of the coercive apparatus of the State, and they absolutely exclude the notion of morality from the field of action of the penal code. In dealing with sexual offenses Sovietist law clearly and definitely sets itself to protect those who are physically and socially weak, and the statutes dealing with sexual offenses are to be found in the chapter on crimes against the life, health, the liberty, and dignity of the person. And from this position flows the kind and number of acts punishable as sexual offenses: Any kind of violence to children and those who, while not exactly children, are as children in such matters. This act is punished almost on the same footing as murder—with eight years loss of liberty. Other misdeeds penalized by the Bolshevist Code are: the corruption of minors; sexual relations brought about by physical violence, threats, intimidation, or by taking advantage of

the helpless condition of the victim; to compel a woman to enter into intimate relations with one on whom she is economically dependent or to whom she is subject in business; to constrain, force, or persuade women to become prostitutes; to procure girls or women; to keep a disorderly house, etc.

This list of punishable offenses reveals the social standpoint of the Soviet lawgivers with perfect clearness. Nor should it be forgotten that the punishments enacted for sexual offenses are, as I said, well-nigh equal to those decreed for murder. This circumstance enables one to measure the importance ascribed by them to the protection of the sexual intangibility of all those who are socially and physically weak.

It is interesting in this connection to learn the view taken by Soviet jurists on the evil effects of monogamy. Many of them hold with Engels that the monogamous family was the source of slavery, of the degradation of women, of the legalization of the foulest debauchery, and of low sexual morality in cultural lands. The object of the organization of the monogamous family, they contend, was the establishment of the rule of the man and of the undoubted legality of the children—the future heirs of the father's property. And this subjection of the woman to the man was the first division into classes, the first subjection of one class to another.

Before quitting the subject of sexual legislation it may be of interest to underline some of the points in which, congruously with the antireligious and purely biological ideas prevalent in the Union, it differs from that of other countries. At an interesting International Congress for Sexual Reform held in Copenhagen in July, 1928, to which fourteen countries sent delegates, the representative of the Soviets, Professor Pasche-Ozerski, of the University of

Kieff, gave a detailed exposé of the reforms introduced in his country which commanded general attention. He was proud to think that a long list of so-called sexual offenses which still hold their places in the criminal code of most countries have been thrown overboard by the Soviet republics, such for instance as concubinage, sodomy, pederasty, incest, prostitution, abortion, and birth-control practices. The Soviet State, he went on to say, sets every mode of sexual cohabitation on the same plane as marriage duly registered. Hence, in the Soviet Union there is no difficulty about so-called illegitimate children and unmarried mothers. Prostitution too, from the angle of vision of the proletarian State, is a purely social evil caused exclusively by economic conditions. The remedial measures of the Soviet legislation should therefore be directed not against the prostitutes but against prostitution, the causes of which can and should be removed.

The congress in its resolutions placed it upon record that of all countries the Soviet Union is the first and as yet the only one which has solved the sexual problem aright, and that its legislation on the subject is now become a pattern for reform on a scientific basis which may serve as a guide to other countries.[1] Dr. Genss of Moscow affirms that it was a humane action to abolish the barbarous punishments meted out by the Czarist government to those who procured abortion. "Three years later," he continued, "in November, 1920, we expressly legalized the practice. During the past decade we have collected enormous materials for a study of the results of our policy." And he characterized those results as encouraging. The decrease in the number of agonizing women who used to be transported to hospitals after unskilled treatment for abortion, often to die there, is one favorable indication, and the

[1]Cf. *Das Neue Russland*, V. Jahrgang (1928), Heft, 7–8.

marked decrease in the number of those victims is another. "We want our children," he went on to say, "to come as welcome guests to the table of life."

The new Soviet code, by embodying the principle of social responsibility in the place of the traditional distinction between morally responsible and irresponsible, has won golden opinions and words of high praise from authorities like Enrico Ferri, who believes that in the future—it may be in a distant future—other peoples will follow the example courageously set by the Soviets. In the Soviet Union, according to Professor Pasche-Ozerski, there is no such thing as punishment, there are only measures adopted for the defense of society or else the exercise of beneficent influence over the persons who have committed acts that jeopardize society. The Soviets, he affirms, preach and practice and struggle against crime, not against criminals, and hold that crimes are caused by economic conditions, and can therefore be hindered or lessened.

The Soviet penal code lays it down expressly that

> The measures adopted for the protection of society cannot have for their object the infliction of physical suffering or the humiliation of human dignity, neither is vengeance or chastisement their aim.[1]

The measures now applicable are of three kinds: measures of social defense prescribed by a tribunal for the betterment of the misdemeanant; measures of a medical nature; measures of a medico-pedagogical character. (1) All those expedients are temporary except one which is for the lifetime of the accused. Anyone declared to be an enemy of the workers forfeits his rights as citizen of the Soviet Union and is banished forever from the precincts of the republic. (2) Loss of freedom combined with strict isolation, or without strict isolation, is the most usual method of social

[1]Penal Code, statute 9, R. S. F. S. R.

defense. The duration of this treatment varies from one day to ten years. Loss of freedom for a period longer than ten years is not permissible. (3) Another expedient for social defense peculiar to the Soviets is forced labor lasting from one day to one year, but never longer, and without loss of personal freedom. (4) Another device consists in the expulsion of the condemned citizen from Soviet territory for a period not exceeding five years. (5) Expulsion from the territory of a definite Soviet republic or from a district within it for a period of not more than five years. (6) Restriction of domicile to a certain stretch of Soviet territory for a term not exceeding five years. (7) Loss of active and passive electoral rights and of parental rights for a term not exceeding five years. (8) Disqualification for this or that office or occupation for a term not above five years. (9) Confiscation of property, entire or partial. Then come fines, of which the highest amounts to 10,000 roubles. If the condemned man can afford to pay but will not, his sentence is commuted to forced labor without loss of freedom. The mildest measures adopted by a court of law are public blame and the obligation to make amends for the injury inflicted.

To youths up to the age of fourteen, only medical or medico-pedagogical treatment can be applied, and even after the age of fourteen up to sixteen as a rule recourse is had to the same mild methods.

The extreme measure of social defense is death. All the others are temporary and transient, as indeed is everything in Sovietdom, movement, action, creation being the normal conditions of existence. Capital punishment is doubly provisional and is therefore not considered to be an integral part of the system of defensive measures of society. The new code has not actually abolished it, but is asserted to have reduced its application considerably, no one forfeit-

ing his life whose offense is not a serious menace either to the groundwork of the Soviet system or to the existence of Soviet power. Offenses against the life and property of an individual are not punishable by death. The individual is of relatively slight importance as compared with the community. Capital punishment may not be carried out on youths who had not attained their eighteenth year when they committed the crime. The jurisconsults of Moscow, with whom I had long talks on the subject of the new code, maintain that the entire question of social defense is dominated by the principle of the suitability of the measures to the object in view, and that this varies with time and conditions, so that the crime of a twelvemonth ago may have become the indifferent action of today. It sometimes happens that the penal code has no retribution for some act, and when the Court must proceed by analogy, as it did when a man was accused and found guilty of abducting another man's wife. As there was no penalty to be found in the statute laws, the tribunal dealt with the offense as if the accused individual had poached on another man's preserves, and sentenced him accordingly. When a tribunal sentences a citizen to forced labor for an offense, it does not specify the kind of work that awaits him. This is determined by a special distributing commission.

The first law court I visited was in Moscow where a young worker named Vidoff was being tried for the murder of the president of a club of Young Communists at the instigation, it was supposed, of a group of "clericals." He had possessed a revolver which he flung away as soon as the police began to search for firearms. After his arrest he escaped and ran away and denied that he had had a revolver. When asked to explain this untruth in court he answered that it was a consequence of his fear. "Why

then did you run away?" was the next query. "Because I had been badly mauled by a militiaman." The trial lasted four days. It was conducted simply, fairly, without bias or ceremony. The room was large, unfurnished except for the chairs on the right and the left. There was a space between them large enough to allow people to pass up and down. At the farther end of the apartment stood a table above which hung a portrait of Lenin. The public had access by one door, and at the far end of the room was another door through which the judge and his two assessors entered. Men wore their caps and smoked until the judge and his assessors came in, when we all rose and uncovered our heads. The prisoner, who was seated on a chair in the middle of the passage between the rows of seats of the audience, had been offered a cigarette by someone, but the unexpected arrival of the judge prevented him from lighting it. He rose too but forgot to remove his cap. It was lifted off his head by a policeman. Then a man on my right got up and began to speak. I had taken him for one of the audience, like myself, but he turned out to be the attorney for the government. He delivered a prolix, dispassionate speech which was fairly well put together. Then a man seated among the audience on my left stood up and spoke. He was the counsel for the defense, and his discourse was sober, earnest, and to the point. In Czarist Russia the jury often brought in verdicts in crying opposition to the evidence, especially in cases of infanticide and sexual offenses, so that they really modified the code. In Moscow the case reminded me of the English trials, in which evidence is everything. Had I been a juryman in England and had I received such evidence I would have acquitted the prisoner. That is what the Court did, whereupon Vidoff was set at liberty, and his friends from the factory and the country, some of whom had attended the

trial during the four days of his ordeal, gave him a tremendous ovation when he regained his freedom.

The ideal of the government, I gather from everything I heard and read, is to do away with prisons altogether, substituting disciplinary departments as soon as feasible, and in the meanwhile to neutralize the harmful influence of imprisonment by giving the prisoners healthy work of a reformative character, and education. Under the Czars the prisoners engaged in skilled labor constituted from 4 to 5 per cent. of the whole, and in unskilled work 10 per cent., whereas in the Ukraine prisons to-day 45 per cent. have tasks to perform. At present there are, roughly speaking, 50,000 prisoners engaged daily in 1,120 factories in the Russian Republic. For their benefit there are 1,400 circles and 250,000 lectures annually. The radio is much in use among the prisoners, there being about 10,000 sets and 300 loud speakers and 60,000 radio séances, to say nothing of the cinematograph, etc. Citizen Tolmachev, speaking on the subject, said: "We want to improve the prisons until they ultimately disappear." Instead of forfeiting their liberty the inmates will be merely constrained to work and to learn. The prisoners have their own *Wall News,* in which they write articles without censorship, criticize the conditions that prevail, and ventilate their grievances and ideas. Smoking is permitted. Nearly every cell has its radio.

It is only fair to add that, whereas on paper all these arrangements have a seductive look, are humane, remedial, scientific, and in perfect harmony with the general aims of Sovietism, one cannot be positive that the promise and the fulfillment are virtually identical. Just as the cleanliness extolled of the common refectories and the parental care eulogized of the nurses and attendants in pre-school establishments are very much superior on paper to what they are in the prosaic reality of every day, so one must be ready

to make a large allowance for the difference between the striving of the lawgivers, which is noble, and the attainment, which calls for renewed endeavor, perseverance, and optimism.

This is not the place to enter into a detailed description of prison life and of the flourishing penal colonies in which the various sentences, mild and severe, are being humanely carried out, nor have I had an opportunity to study them properly as yet. What I have read on the subject, and especially the happy faces of the inmates, awakened a feeling akin to enthusiasm within me and inspired me with a desire similar to that once expressed by the late W. T. Stead, to break a window in the Russian capital and get sent to prison in order the better to pick up notions about life there. It is certainly a most interesting subject. But here, as in all Soviet matters, the authorities themselves proclaim the facts—favorable or unfavorable—without reserve or palliative adornment. In December, 1928, the commissary who has had most to do with all these matters and who stands for thoroughness, *sans phrase,* Krylenko by name, delivered a trenchant speech criticizing the present penal code and demanding that it be reformed without delay. The prison population, he maintains, is not dwindling as it would be if the measures adopted by the penal code were, as is asserted, reformative. On the contrary, it is increasing. In November, 1927, there were 125,000 individuals in prisons. Then the amnesty was proclaimed, and one half profited by it, yet by September, 1928, there were 123,000 persons in confinement!

The new code which Commissary Krylenko is anxious to see introduced must, he says, be grounded on one basic idea, namely, the class self-defense of proletarian society against self-conscious elements that are socially dangerous. As for the notion that misdemeanants can be bettered

by repressive measures, it must be thrust aside. "To expect to improve our class enemy by means of internment in a prison is to look for a miracle." Loss of freedom never improves men who have relapsed (recidivists). Again, the present system by which every kind of punishment has its limit is wrong. What we need is the introduction of three elements of self-defense:

> (1) Physical annihilation for the more dangerous class foes. [This reminds me of what Essex said of Strafford's fate: "Stone dead hath no fellow!"] (2) Isolation in various forms combined with the absolute impossibility of the criminal's return to his former social status . . . and (3) A measure of social, political, and moral pedagogical character for chance transgressors of the law.[1]

This account of Soviet law is absurdly brief and insufficient; but all that I could hope for within the limits allowed me was to convince my readers that their first step should be neither to blame nor to praise but to understand.

[1]Taken from *Vetchernaya Moskva*.

CHAPTER XII

BOLSHEVISM

WHAT is Bolshevism? Nobody seems able to unriddle this conundrum satisfactorily. Some regard it as a wild theory combined with a number of quasi-ascetical precepts to be practised for the purpose of realizing it. Others prefer to think of it as a hardy attempt to build up a Marxist State while setting aside certain important, nay, essential, conditions laid down by Marx himself. As a government it is the weakest and the strongest the world has ever known. Judged by traditional standards it is hardly a government at all. For its writ does not always run unquestioned; its ordinances are occasionally scouted or ignored; the taxes have now and again to be gathered by force; some of its official representatives among the five hundred thousand village correspondents—the hearing ears and the seeing eyes of the Central authorities keeping them informed of the economic condition of the country districts—are beaten or murdered by their enemies, the koolaks or well-to-do peasants, and some of the others thus intimidated misinform headquarters. The peasants refuse to sow the areas marked out for them because the Central government insists on buying up the produce at a low price for the behoof of the factory hands and the Red army. Among the consequences of these cross purposes is a scarcity of foodstuffs and a number of local famines which endanger the entire Bolshevist fabric. Therein lies one of the main weaknesses of Sovietism which Lenin foresaw twenty years ago when

he laid it down that "only in the close alliance of the working class with the peasantry under the leadership of the Communistic party can a complete victory be obtained over landowners and capitalists." And to-day that is just as true as it was then, and the wished-for close alliance is still one of the brief desiderata of the Soviets. They have almost exhausted their means of bringing factory hands and husbandmen together and welding them into one brotherhood, and so far without success. These two sections of the population still look askant at each other, and go on thwarting the exertions of the G. P. U.

Lenin, who, like every creative genius, encountered chaos and had to work on that, gave much thought to this and kindred problems, and he delighted to mingle economic with social motives in quite a seductive way. From industrialization on an imposing scale he hoped for a sequence of root-reaching consequences, such as the "definite abandonment by the population of the old religious conception of things human, the molding of a wholly new life purpose; a series of fresh readjustments to the world of our aims and strivings, and above all the conquest of our environment."

At the present stage of the world's history Sovietism is become without doubt one of its commanding forces. It operates with precepts and dogmas, but above all else it has the firm determination and oftentimes the power to meet emergency and fructify occasion. It is the only contemporary government that knows exactly what it wants and employs all available means to obtain it, allowing no extrinsic considerations to form a barrier to its progress. Old World diplomacy, time-hallowed conventions, nay, morality itself, are unceremoniously thrust aside when felt as hindrances. The advantages which this absolute freedom from restraint confers on Bolshevism over its adversaries are incalculable. Altogether the Bolshevists have struck a

fresh note in politics, social structure, art, literature, philosophy, although most of their ideas are far from new. The people whom the revolutionaries undertook to set free were the heirs of generations of slaves, and the habits, ideas, customs, and strivings of so many forbears cannot be shaken off in a decade. The old roots hang about them still and make themselves felt unpleasantly from time to time.

Russia has always been a land of problems and of contradictions, a land of extremes and incongruities, of a disconcerting commingling of the old and the new. It is my inmost conviction that the bulk of the uneducated masses ever since Peter's reforms has sulked and growled and cursed those innovations, and held all the more closely to its own old traditions. They have nursed grievances which they were unable to express. They are still protesting against the wrench given by the Westerners to their habits, beliefs, aspirations, to all that they held most dear. The wound inflicted by Peter, which has never healed, imparted a twist to the psyche of the people which renders a judgment of their character extremely difficult. Thus the entire intelligentsia, despite its professed love for the mooshik, was and has ever been felt to be a foreign body that could never be assimilated by the mentally blind Samsons of old Russia. And this feeling seems to me to be little less operative to-day than it was when men burned themselves alive, joyfully chanting psalms the while, in order to escape from the violence of Peter and his sinful myrmidons. But I also believe that in the subsoil of the Russian character flow spiritual waters which purify and may qualify for a great rôle later on.

But to return to the present rulers of the country, it is almost impossible to form a clear mental picture of any people who have definitely cast off conventional masks. Men distrust them. And the Bolshevists have done this and

gone farther: they have revived the habit of speaking as one thinks—a dead language this in capitalist countries—whereby it becomes still harder to make head or tail of them, so that, despite the fierce light that plays upon every aspect of Soviet life, most of its phases, like so many of its newly coined words, are mere algebraic shorthand which means nothing to the uninitiated outsider. Our political leaders are puzzled how to behave toward them, and our present attitude—distrustful, hostile, provocative—merely sharpens their wits, exercises their skill, and keeps their talents from rusting.

In what, then, does Soviet rule really consist? To this and kindred questions Lenin's utterances offer tentative answers.

> Its essence [he said] lies in this, that whereas formerly the government was run by wealthy capitalists it is now, for the first time, carried on by the masses whom they oppressed. . . . For the first time in history the power of the State with us is so apportioned that only working men and laboring peasants—exploiters excluded—constitute the mass organizations—the Councils or Soviets—to whom all the power of the State is handed over.
>
> We are well aware [he added] that our Soviet organization suffers from many defects. Besides, Soviet power is no wonder-working talisman. It does not profess to remedy at a single stroke the evils of the past—illiteracy, lack of culture, the legacies of savage warfare and those of greedy capitalism. But on the other hand it enables one to pass over to Socialism. It nerves those who are trodden underfoot to take little by little into their own hands the entire administration of the State, the management of its political economy, and the direction of its productivity.

Nothing could be more difficult than to analyze correctly the complex problems created by the October Revolution in Russia, while it is a sheer impossibility to forecast the outcome of the Soviets' essays to solve them. Bolshevism, like so many other new organisms, is full of over-

weening self-confidence, imagines that it strikes the stars with its sublime head and that the ocean is not up to its knees; in short, it fancies that all things are feasible. Hence it sometimes begins where it should end and is astonished at the consequences. With the best plan the world has ever witnessed the Bolshevists can effect little unless their human instruments are trustworthy, loyal, docile. Are they that? Do they not reverse their instructions and play their leaders false? If not, what is the explanation of the hundreds of burshui who glide into the various local councils; of the official institutions who help to color the eggs for Easter festivities; of the embezzlement that goes on? I sometimes think that the Bolshevists are still in a hostile land without being aware of the fact. They assume the existence of many of the things they wish and then act as though their assumptions were realities. Holding the doctrine that everything is in flux and provisional—a doctrine which gives them an enormous pull over their enemies, enabling them to adjust and readjust their tactics to circumstances—they do not seem to have fully availed themselves of this advantage. At present they are compassed about with perils and menaced with crises and famines which it is their interest to ward off at all costs, at any rate until the Five Year Plan has matured.

Lenin, whose vision was unmatched for clearness, said:

> We are marching, closely wedged together, along a precipitous and difficult path, holding each other tightly hand by hand, surrounded on all sides by enemies, and we nearly always have to go under their fire. But we are united by freely taken resolutions precisely for the purpose of fighting against our foes and not of retreating into the neighboring bog.

Sovietism is no mere philosophy content to assert itself or even to indoctrinate others by convincing, persuading, or cajoling them. It is not a community whose members

are grouped and held together by identity of views which they are satisfied to profess or spread by means of the written or spoken word alone; it is not even a quasi-religious sodality content to expound its precepts in meeting houses and conventicles. Yet most nations behave as though it were one of those harmless corporations. *It is a live revolutionary center for the kindling and spreading of revolutions on all sides.* Its function now and for all time is to generate "whirlwinds of tempestuous fire" among capitalist peoples. That is Bolshevism in its international aspect; and when it loses its fire or damps it it has ceased to exist.

> The dictatorship of the proletariat [said Lenin] consists in the tenacious struggle, bloody and bloodless, violent and pacific, military and economic, pedagogical and administrative against the forces and traditions of the old régime. . . . The era of the bourgeois-democratic parliamentary rule is over. A new chapter has begun in the world's history—the epoch of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

These clear definitions have never been assimilated, nor even taken to heart, by the happy-go-lucky statesmen of the rest of Europe, some of whom are as much authorities in world politics as a midwife or a gravedigger in problems of time and eternity.

The October Revolution was a tremendous popular outburst, unprecedented in history for its ferocity. If I were the spokesman of Christianity I should feel tempted to identify its genial leader and the rank and file of his followers with Anti-Christ and his hordes. But I am not thus qualified to speak in the name of Christianity. Were I a parliamentarian I might enumerate many fundamental differences between the French Revolution and that effected by Lenin and his associates. For one thing, the chiefs of the latter outlived their time and work, whereas those of the French Revolution died when they should; each

one quitting the stage as soon as he had played his part there and other actors were due to come on. Mirabeau died when his function was accomplished. Danton, Desmoulins, Robespierre descended to the abyss at the right moment, leaving the road clear for a new type of workers, men animated by a positive spirit, eager and able to clear away the ruins, and build up a new political structure. Napoleon, despite his enormous defects, was for a time the incarnation of this new spirit. In Russia, it has been said, nothing of this kind occurred. On the contrary, the agitators who rose up and crushed Czarism and its supporters—except Lenin, who ought to have lived to crown his work—went on destroying its real and supposed traces for a considerable time. In other respects the two upheavals, it has been said, are chips of one and the same block.

Loose comparisons of this kind between two sets of historical phenomena, which have at most a superficial likeness in common while in essentials they are wide apart, are grossly misleading. For the Utopia of the French Encyclopedists and of their revolutionary disciples was a modern reproduction of the great Roman republic, which they had been brought up to admire as the model of the perfect State. They accepted Rome's experience as final and resolved to make the most of it. Hence, it never occurred to the most iconoclastic of the French revolutionists to do away with the conception of the family or of the wide-ranging power of the father as head of the family, to abolish marriage, to modify the current idea of property, or the many implications of these principles. The French Revolution was careful to preserve intact all these institutions, and to strengthen and spread them, and even to religion itself, which at first was jibed and scoffed at, certain important functions were allotted in the regenerate State. And all these symptoms of conservatism in the midst of a tremendous upheaval

were consecrated in Chateaubriand's overrated but highly seasonal book *Le Génie du Christianisme*.

Bolshevism, on the contrary, is first of all a relentless destroyer of the roots of past culture, religious, social, pedagogical, and also of those champions of that culture who remain true to it, refusing to be converted and live. The Bolshevists created the new woman, endowed with full power over her body and her mind, and annihilated all the "crimes" against morality which still figure in our suprannuated penal codes, and they turned marriage into an experiment capable of being renewed whenever the parties feel inclined to try their luck again, and abolished sexual honor. Between the two movements, therefore, there is no root likeness. They differ in all essentials. Everything in the Bolshevist world, always excepting Marxism, which is sacrosanct and enduring, is transient and therefore provisional.

The fury of the Russian people like that of the French is conceivable. It was the natural outcome of the repressed but accumulated hatred of centuries which transformed human beings into wild beasts. It was natural because congruous with the curious character of the Slav—a mixture of sentimental tenderness and ferocious cruelty. And as there was no restraining hand or voice or precept, no moral brakes to keep the revolutionists from gliding precipitously down the inclined plane toward ultimate consequences, the same destructive spirit continued rampant after the main occasion for its exercise had passed away.

Maxim Gorky described this spirit very graphically in his book *Revolution and Culture* at the outset of the Bolshevist upheaval. On December 31, 1917, he wrote:

> What will the New Year bring us? Everything that we are able to accomplish. But in order to be able to be up and doing we must believe that those past, terrible, bloodstained days are the birth of the

great new Russia. And yet . . . now that everyone is preaching that we are all brothers and equals, they are stealing from each other and pulling off their neighbors' clothes to the last stitch; while war is being waged against the idol of personal property, people are attacking each other like ferocious animals and seizing all they can lay hands on; and while loudly proclaiming liberty for all, they are perpetrating most terrible deeds. It is in these days of such contradictions that the new Russia is being born. . . .

At present the Russian individual is not good; in fact, he is worse than ever he was. He lacks faith in the ripening future of the fruits of his victory. He is incapable of realizing his liberty, all his good qualities have sunk and gone, and his evil ones have risen to the surface, and all the time he is feeling his way. Is he really free? His efforts are costing both himself and those around him dearly.

But life, cruel and merciless, will soon put him in harness and compel him to toil—toil amicably—and it will help him to forget all the acts of oppression and the shameful slavery which are preventing him from working now.

New people will bring forth new habits, and from new habits will emerge new people.

Into the world a man is coming, a man who has never undergone slavery or oppression, and who will not enslave or oppress others. Let us hope that this new man will devote himself to cultural tasks and will love his work. Work undertaken with love in the heart will be creative work. If only a man can be made to love his task, everything else will follow.

The establishment of the Soviet government is a striking example of the latter-day miracle wrought by Bolshevism. At the time nobody would have deemed it possible. The whole world was arrayed against its founders. Yet it came to pass in spite of domestic and foreign foes and superlatively adverse circumstances. And what is more, it has established itself firmly and taken root and looks back with satisfaction on the achievements of a decade, and looks forward with confidence to the still vaster undertakings of the present and immediate future. The most striking of these is the grandiose project for the industrialization of

agriculture, the object of which is to equalize the conditions of peasants and town workers and destroy those invidious distinctions which have hitherto hindered the growth of harmony between the two groups. In this connection a saying of Lenin's is worth quoting, because it will be verified or disproved within the next five years and because on the outcome depends the future of Bolshevism as a state-building system. This dictum runs: "In last analysis the fate of our Republic depends on whether the bulk of the peasantry will march in line with the working classes, keeping loyally banded together with them." Many people, whose ambition is not so much to know as to utter opinions, affirm that the peasantry will go their own way and leave the town workers in the lurch; and already they treat us to appalling pictures of the consequences. I make no forecast, but content myself with a brief comment on the thrilling measure now being adopted by the Central government to get the case-hardened tillers of the soil to stand back to back with the working men. This gigantic scheme, which I have already sketched, is known as the Five Year Plan. Its object in the first instance is to raise industries and agriculture alike by the year 1933 to the highest attainable levels. Factory production is to be over 100 per cent. more than it actually is. Husbandry is to be industrialized, and industrial farming on a gigantic scale is to become an integral part of the scheme. When I was in Leningrad in the year 1928 the authorities issued an internal loan to which the peasants were invited to subscribe and the object of which was to provide funds for the realization of this colossal project. A notion of its magnitude may be formed when I say that the grain farms mentioned above, which are being laid out heedless of cost, extend over more than thirty million acres. American tractors have been pur-

chased without stint, and the grain production expected is seven million metric tons! This might well be the scheme of one of those daydreamers whom Lenin would fain banish from his ideal State, and many writers are turning it into ridicule. But I am unable to accept this short-sighted view. The conquest of environment is one of the Bolshevists' aims, and it will not be gainsaid that they have "achieved the impossible" more than once already, so that it would be unwise to assert that they may not effect it again. Anyhow, as Goethe puts it, "Our desires are the forefeelings of our capacities, heralds of that which we shall be able to achieve." Only that cause is lost which is given up by its adherents.

The problem that confronted the triumphant revolutionists was unique in the world's history and the means of solving it were utterly inadequate. One of the aims was the uplifting of workers and husbandmen from the social status of demi-serfs to that of demi-rulers. And of what workers and peasants? Not of a homogeneous population, but of a disconcerting number of races, peoples, tongues, and tribes—some benighted cave folk, others, such as the Germans and the Ukrainians, cultured. One hundred and fifty-six nationalists in all! These peoples were to be drawn together by a doctrine too abstract for many of them to assimilate; a doctrine which had to be simplified for their behoof and impressed upon their rigid minds little by little; and when they had mastered it they were next expected to readjust their aspirations and their lives to that doctrine by a painful process of self-abnegation. This was really conversion to a higher life for which many of those peoples had never felt a vocation.

Among the means to which the Bolshevists had recourse were a struggle to the death against illiteracy, superstition, and religion, with the damping of the imagination in all

its forms and stages from infancy onward, and the evocation of a degree of faith in Marxism greater far than that which had been required of them by their ancestral religions. Other means were scientific training, labor organization, laws, and sanctions. For such a program they needed organizers, money, books, houses; and their supply of these requisites was wholly inadequate. Hence they were forced to improvise; and all improvisations are fraught with imperfections and oversights. The shortcomings, antinomies, and incongruities of Sovietism therefore are many —some amusing, others fundamental, and they are all overstressed by hostile critics and satirists. One could fill a big volume with them. But what do they prove? Simply that several of the peoples who are being trained for their new and difficult rôle in the world were sadly backward and dull of apprehension. On the other hand, they also attest the wisdom of the government which publishes these shortcomings to its people and the world in the hope that they will be removed. This candor is one of the most efficacious preservatives of Sovietism. Many of the secret wounds from which it had been suffering have been cicatrized by the light and heat of publicity. Examples abound. On one occasion the weeding commissions disfranchised numerous members of the Communist party because they were found to be sons and daughters of bourgeois parents. The publicity given to this act has led to a modification of the law on which it was based, and a decree has been promulgated to the effect that this exclusion is to be pronounced only if the persons deliberately concealed the facts when entering the university or public service, not otherwise.

There is no finality about the work of the Soviets. Everything they do is provisional, and they proclaim this from the housetops. Their legislation, administration, in fact the entire structure of Sovietism as we now behold it, is good

for the present only. In a few years other forms will have superseded those of to-day, and the nearer they approach their goal the greater will the changes become. Each day brings its own task, which must be performed here and now. Movement, labor, construction are their watchwords. The republics are seething masses of kaleidoscopic changes, each individual realizing Fichte's dictum: "Toil, Toil! That is what we are here for," or that of Frederick the Great: "It is not necessary that I should live, but it is indispensable that I should work." Hence in the Soviet Republics the citizens are unsettled, restless, expectant, ever on the alert. They have a forefeeling of further world changes; catastrophic it may be, but root-reaching and unavoidable. They are stages in the journey. And this forefeeling is now being shared by bourgeois nations who, by making haste to spend, waste, and destroy what they have amassed, disgust sober-minded persons by their quirks and vagaries and drive many to Fascism or to Communism.

One of the most salutary institutions created by the Soviets is, I have already stated, the *Wall News*. It is a list of the defects of the institution in which it is hung up, of examples of mismanagement, etc. Its object is to bring abuses to the knowledge of those who can redress them. It is supplemented by many of the five hundred thousand correspondents who keep the authorities in touch with everything that goes on in the provinces. The *Wall News Sheet* is hung up everywhere in the Soviet Union: in factories, in workshops, in schools, in clubs, in museums, in reading huts; in fact, in every place where people congregate. It is a species of daily self-criticism, an examination of conscience by the public, a confession of sins with a view to amendment. One day I was visiting a museum and preparing to take in all the delights it might offer me when my attention was seized and held fast by a clumsy sheet of

paper hanging on the wall near the door covered with sprawling letters. Drawing nearer, I saw that the remarks were expressions of emphatic dissatisfaction with various arrangements of the museum. In some of those sheets there were strong denunciations and bold projects of betterment.

The first of these wall sheets made its appearance in the Red Putiloff factory in Leningrad in the year 1923. Three years previously some similar sheets had been fitfully written and exposed in the Red army barracks. Gradually the experiment found favor in the eyes of the public, and these lists have become popular not only with the masses but also with the technical staffs. By means of them the authorities throughout the land are kept acquainted with what is happening in towns, in the country, in every branch of public life, and are supplied with valuable information which otherwise would never reach their ears. It is to their credit that they systematically encourage this spirit of criticism, and when abuses are thus brought to their notice, remedy them. It is credibly affirmed that out of a hundred wrongs thus denounced at least eighty are righted. It was through the *Wall News* that the beer shops in the neighborhood of the Putiloff factory were closed down owing to the persistent campaign waged against them by the workers themselves. In Orexovo, in the district of Zuiffsky, a school was opened by the government, in which were also a reading hut and a coöperative store which sold vodka. Owing to this trade the children often beheld drunken people, witnessed their brawls, and were initiated in their intrigues. The teachers of the establishment, who happened to be husband and wife, seconded by the pupils, asked that the coöperative should be removed from the school premises. But no notice was taken of their request. They then wrote to the *Wall News Sheet* describing various abuses which were being practised under their eyes,

and relating one in particular, a most infamous deed perpetrated by the local Soviet representative. Then the Moscow heads of this section ordered the matter to be looked into and, on ascertaining that the complaints were grounded, had their own representative in the village dismissed from his post. The following is a more recent and less serious case in which no action has yet been taken.[1] A firm of undertakers has a scale of prices for burial which the people find unjust. The cost of interring a worker who was earning fifty roubles a month is five roubles, and the scale increases until it amounts to fifty roubles for those who were without work because they had resources of their own. But this rule is a crying injustice in the case of people who are unemployed solely because unsuccessful in their quest for occupation.

Peasants and workers acting as correspondents play a prominent part in Soviet journalism, and not only in journalism. Sometimes a citizen barely one step removed from illiteracy gets his preliminary training by contributing to the *Wall News Sheet* of his factory or factory club. If his remarks testify to cleverness and brilliancy he is taken in hand, learns to express himself clearly and logically on various topics, great and little, concerning his district, and to brandmark everything that seems to him amiss in the administration. The subjects of these observations range from the relations of the sexes to the liquidation of the three-field system. The Soviets pride themselves on the fact that whereas in other lands the press aims chiefly at the formation of public opinion, with them the main emphasis is laid on its rôle in the organization of society. Lenin wrote:

> With the help of the press a permanent organization will come into being for dealing with general as well as local affairs, teaching its mem-

[1] I am writing in the month of July, 1929.

bers to follow political events attentively, to assess aright their significance and their influence on the various sections of the population, and to devise efficacious means of putting pressure upon events from the side of the revolutionary party. A regular army of tried workers will then rally to this common task.

It is a curious fact that many of the public men prominent to-day in Moscow and Leningrad were at one time mere worker correspondents, among them Kalinin, who is to-day the president of the U. S. S. R. central executive committee.

The duties of the worker- or peasant-correspondent are to state what is amiss, or what he thinks is amiss, and to suggest how it might be bettered, in the factory, village, or State department in which his lines happen to be set. All he has to do is to write to the local *Wall News Sheet;* the board of editors of this paper are then bound to forward his strictures to the proper quarters and also to see that due note is taken of them. Meetings of the *Wall News Sheet* board of editors are public. All important questions connected with this institution and the functions of the correspondents are decided in the presence of the greatest possible number of the men themselves. The task of the worker- and especially that of the peasant-correspondent is not without its risks, for it is their ungrateful job to detect and point out what individuals are able to pay heavier taxes and how much. And this is vigorously resented. Revenge, sometimes in the form of clueless murder, often follows on the heels of the offence. To meet this kind of terror, which is said to be spreading, special deterrent legislation exists for the condign punishment of violence against correspondents. But these on their side are liable to severe punishment should they abuse the public trust.

Interesting details were furnished by Commissary Kry-

lenko, the public prosecutor, who said that in 1926 legal investigation had been made into 59,981 complaints in the *Wall News* and by those correspondents, and that criminal indictments were filed against the persons accused. In 1927 these denunciations had increased to 72,230, i. e., by 20 per cent., and in the year 1928 the increase over 1927 was 27.8 per cent.; 31.7 per cent. of these remarks referred to misdemeanors by officials in the course of their work; 10 per cent. to irregularities in the coöperative movement; 7.2 per cent. to infringements of the labor code; 5.4 per cent. to agriculture and forestry, and 6 per cent. to village speculation.

This institution is but an application of the general principle that all the groups interested in any project or measure have to be considered as to their views, their interests, their requirements. In the schools we saw that the very children were examined as to what books they liked, what films they desired to see, etc., and the reasons for their preference; in the dramatic and operatic spheres the theatergoing public is always requested to say what it thinks of the various plays, what were the good points, which the flaws, what plays they like better and why, and these answers are carefully considered by the experts with a view to utilizing them as soon as possible.

In harmony with this intense publicity is the unblushing candor, not to call it by a harsher name, of the Soviet authorities in every public department. They saucily face the facts and proclaim the truth with especial emphasis when it happens to be unfavorable to themselves. Let a writer, for instance, affirm that in Russia there is no scarcity of food, of cash, or of raw stuffs, and they would be the first to contradict him. If he were to eulogize their penal code they would depute Commissary Krylenko to prove that it is full of defects, is doing positive harm, and must

be bettered as soon as may be. If one were to affirm that the attitude of the peasants toward the government is loyal and satisfactory, they would make known their grave difficulties with the koolaks, inveigh against these, and announce further measures of special self-defence. If somebody asserted that the anti-religious campaign was changing the face of Russia, they would remind him of the sudden sprouting up of sects. A striking instance of this outspokenness occurred in a speech delivered by Commissary Tomsky at the Congress of Professional Alliances.[1] The topic was Embezzlement and Frauds. He said: "For the first six months of the year 1928 frauds amounted to 442,766 roubles. And this represents only the sums reckoned up by us.

"Where do they steal? Everywhere: in factories, in banks for mutual help, in clubs, in district branches, in provincial and territorial branches; in a word, everywhere. We have a special rubric: 'Information on this subject is lacking.' That means that somewhere frauds are being perpetrated, but where we do not know. Well, who is it that perpetrates those frauds? To the shame of our corporation I must avow that in the front rank stand the presidents. How are the abstracters of moneys apportioned among the political groups? Almost equally. People of no party defraud; Communists defraud; young Communists defraud; and those individuals defraud about whom 'information is lacking.' "

This attitude, so unusual in governments of the old type, produced a deep impression on me and compelled my ungrudging admiration. I look upon it as one of the most trustworthy safeguards of the Soviets.

The education of the young was another of the peculiar Soviet methods that made a deep impression on me. Years ago in China I was talking to a Roman Catholic missionary,

[1] At the close of 1928.

a man who knew the world and its ways. To him I mentioned that from what I had seen and heard I had grave doubts about the sincerity of many Chinese converts to Christianity. "Your doubts may be well grounded," he replied. "My own experience is that we obtain the most satisfactory results when we get hold of the children before they can walk or talk, and have their entire education in our hands from A to Z. Then we have genuine Catholics who on the whole justify our expectations." Pobiedonostoff expressed similar views to me when talking about the Buddhists whom he was compelling to enter the Orthodox Church. From them he anticipated very little, but a good deal from their children. And now the Soviets are applying the same maxim, apparently with success. The children are imbued with biological dogmas and aggressive atheism, and their general upbringing is Spartan in spirit. The one formidable obstacle in the way is the hold which religion, especially Christianity, still has on them. Hence the bitter animus displayed against churches and creeds. The obstacle would probably have been more formidable if the Roman Catholic Church with its compact organization had been established in the country instead of Russian Orthodoxy which, having never had an existence wholly independent of the State, and never uttered a genuine *non possumus,* is much less awe-inspiring and less capable of withstanding the various anti-religious onslaughts of the godless sodalities. The sectarians are the people from whom invincible opposition to all anti-religious or military measures is to be apprehended, nay, is gradually being experienced. Even the easy-going peasant who continues to worship in the church where his fathers worshiped sometimes refuses to be evicted from its sacred precincts, and is ready to take the consequences. In the village of Velishanka there was a church which the authorities were minded to turn into a

school. But when the commission arrived for the purpose of sealing up the church the faithful rang the tocsin. The crowd that formed there, consisting of some two thousand peasants, angrily vetoed the sealing of the church and would not disperse until the commander of the militia, whom the president of the rural Soviet had summoned, assured them that the church should not be closed. This incident was publicly narrated by Commissary Rykoff in the spring of 1929. It is characteristic and ominous.

By denying all spiritual religion and brandmarking agnosticism itself as a theological fantasy, the Soviet leaders seem to me to pass out of the open-air region of free speculation into the narrow conventicle of a sect. On the other hand, however, in the sincerity of their striving for the well-being of their fellows, and in their heroic self-denial for the attainment of that end, we may discern a quasi-religious under-texture, a latent sense of the supernatural.

The people who give the anti-religious circles most trouble are the Stundists, Molokani, Pashkovists, Adventists, together with a host of other sects, whose rule of life is strictly evangelical and is actually adhered to. They refuse to be turned from their dogmas and their precepts by the blandishments of the irreligious fraternities, or the threats and heavy pressure of zealous local authorities. And all the military force in the world is powerless against these obscure heroes. As they were under the Czars, when imprisonment, banishment to inhospitable districts, hunger, disease, and death made not the slightest impression on their determination, so they are under the Soviets, and so they are likely to remain indefinitely. Rightly or wrongly they cherish beliefs which have given purpose to their lives and direction to their strivings. And these beliefs they will not give up for the Soviet government or the Red army.

The furious onsets on religion directed or seconded by

the authorities seem to have damaged in lieu of furthering the godless cause championed by the Soviets. In the beginning the authorities sought to strike at the very roots of religion and put it *hors de combat* before it could react, but they soon found arrayed among their enemies not merely the half-hearted Orthodox priests, ighumens, and bishops, whose opposition meant as little as their submission, but the powerful body of the peasantry without whose good will and active coöperation the fusion of the two great groups of the population—workers in the factories and tillers of the soil—into one homogeneous brotherhood must remain a pious desire. Thus in their haste the statesmen of Moscow endangered the success of their policy and needlessly lowered their prestige. Zealous propagandists, they lost no time in metamorphosing numerous buildings of the established Church—a Circean operation too delicate for their capacities. Some of their measures were absolutely grotesque, as for example the abolition of Christmas and Easter Sunday and other Church festivals by a stroke of the pen. After a while they seemingly desisted from this vicarious action, and the relations between Church and State were kept within the legal bounds. But from time to time explosions of enthusiasm betray various Bolshevist associations into strange aberrations. In the winter of 1928, during my visit, efforts were again made to do away with the celebration of Christmas—a pagan festival that was time hallowed long before the birth of Christianity—efforts which were neither dignified nor efficacious, although the authorities themselves chimed in. The selling of Christmas trees was strictly forbidden, and, like the selling of alcohol prohibited in the United States, was indulged in with all the greater gusto. The dressing of shop windows was likewise solemnly penalized, but the celebration of the great festival within doors was all the intenser and heartier. In the White

Russian Republic, too, an elaborate campaign was opened in the spring of 1929 against the celebration of Easter, and a resolution was passed abolishing the word "Easter" henceforth forevermore and substituting therefor the festival of the "First Furrow." In the clubs and other Sovietist institutions of the capital anti-religious festivities were arranged on an impressive scale for the purpose of reconciling the population to the abolition of Easter. On the boulevards, squares, and public places carnivals, dances, and music, terminating with torchlight processions and violent diatribes against religion, were some of the means vainly employed to wean the people from its beloved festivals. Even Sunday itself has been wiped out of the Soviet calendar. In Czaritsin the Communist youth decided to transfer the legal day of rest from Sunday to Wednesday. Schoolmasters and schoolmistresses in the province of Tver declared Sunday to be no longer a day of repose and suggested Thursday instead. This proposal was accepted by the district authorities and carried. In the art of rigging out exhibitions the Soviets are past masters, and they decided to bring godlessness within their scope. Accordingly they have opened a remarkable antireligious exhibition in Moscow, of which it is said that the magnitude and variety of its exhibits are unmatched. The object is to demonstrate the reactionary tendency of the religious beliefs and superstitions of the Russian people and to reveal the odious parts they played in the past as props of monarchic tyranny.

Despite these endeavors, religion cannot be abolished quite as easily as a political régime or a social institution. It is rooted firmly in the souls of the masses, and only the new generation which has passed through the educational mill of Bolshevism has shaken it off. To-day old people may be seen going to church on Sundays, and their chil-

dren skipping off to the reading hut, the peasants' house, or some other Soviet institution.

A chapter on religion in the Soviet Republics might be written palpitating with every kind of human interest and exhibiting the various elements of the population in the rôles officially prescribed to them, and in those in which they really act. One set of strict adherents of Sovietism in a country district, obeying every injunction of headquarters with alacrity, are suddenly revealed as pious churchgoers who cover the walls of their huts with icons and lamplets and pray to the ancient deity in the old way. Another group of well-meaning peasants are discovered offering up fervent prayers to the God of Orthodox Christians for the eternal repose of Lenin's soul—mere indications of the difficulty which the Russian peasant encounters in freeing himself from the "trammels of religion." And those are the mild and moderate congregations of the Orthodox Church. The sectarians are a hundred times more resolute, more enterprising, more persevering than these, and the task of proselytizers and persecutors whose business is to convert them by hook or by crook to godlessness is, to my thinking, hopeless.

Meanwhile, in this unequal struggle with churches and creeds, the government is now become neutral in form, the only measures with which it has permanently identified itself being the separation of Church and State, and the withdrawal of every kind of material support from the former. There are still numerous citizens in the Soviet Union who are patiently waiting for the bliss of the next life and who obstinately refuse to abandon this hope without any substitute, and feel the truth of the Moslem proverb, that if you believe but in a stone it will do you good.

Some of the commissaries perceive and proclaim the folly of employing material weapons against phenomena of a

spiritual order. At a congress held in May, 1929, one of the orators in an ecstatic mood hinted at the need of harsher measures and of the employment of all the force of the State against believers, whereupon Commissary Rykoff remarked that what it came to was that arguments were to be superseded by the stick. "Where is the religious haze complained of?" he asked; "and where is it to be dispelled? In the people's heads? In the heads of what people? Of those peasants and of those workers who have not yet got rid of religion? The victims of administrative measures of this character might easily be the middle and the poor groups who, while they uphold the power of the Soviets, have not yet broken with the usages of their religion. To quarrel with these layers of the population for the sake of administrative whims is far from desirable."

And so in Sovietdom the citizens are free to belong to any creed they may select and also to retain their churches if they can pay for them, but no member of any religious denomination may be received into the bosom of the Communist party. From these and other indications one may safely infer the enormous effective power wielded indirectly by the peasantry in various branches of Soviet politics. Nor is one surprised to learn that "attention to the needs of the peasants" is become the *mot d'ordre* of Soviet Russia to-day.

The growing influence of Bolshevism on foreign peoples is become a serious problem for European statesmen. Lenin hoped that the October Revolution would usher in a social and political upheaval everywhere. Happily in this he was mistaken, but the capitalist world was panic stricken for a while—until all immediate danger had passed away. Since then it has become blithesome and enterprising once more. And yet the specter is appearing anew in many places simultaneously.

In the East, for instance, the Soviets proceed with remarkable astuteness, adjusting their forces to their materials and to the nature and extent of their task. They watch the trend of events there, wait for a crisis or produce one, and then aid the rebels, whoever they may be. In European countries their procedure is that of the Spanish republican Lerroux, who says to his followers: "I come not to make a revolution but to make a little progress in revolution every day." Such are the methods they have been following in the Far East, India, Persia, Afghanistan, and in Europe. Already they have scored noteworthy successes, and there is apparently nothing to stop their farther advance. Those who are anxious to know how they have fared there will find the answer in the trial of the thirty-two Communists at Meerut, in the United Provinces, for attempting to deprive the present Emperor of India of his sovereignty.

As a result of their subtle propaganda there Communism has for the first time made its appearance in India, modestly as yet, among the textile workers of Calcutta and Bombay. Calling themselves the Red Flag Union, they organized the great strike of May, 1928, and raised political issues never before mooted in that country. Hitherto the svaraj or home-rule movement was the one burning problem to which universal attention was paid and restless peoples' energies were directed. To-day the ominous word has gone forth that home rule will not, cannot, meet the requirements of the people of India because in the svaraj régime, were it established, their miserable wages and their modified serfdom would continue to be exactly what they are. Their real enemies, it is explained, are their employers. They are the bloodsuckers who are oppressing and exploiting the workers, and it is against them and their system that the struggle must be waged and waged implacably. The svaraj movement is but a blind—what the red cloth

is to the bull. Class war is the unique remedy for the peoples' grievances.

This readjustment of tactics is symptomatic. It is the most significant event that has taken place in India for generations. Yet, as the Russians put it, these are but the flowers. The berries will ripen later. . . .

In pre-war times capitalistic peoples struggled discreetly for land and water. To-day they are making ready to fight relentlessly for land and water and air. All that remains to them of former acquisitions are the worship of nationalism and militarism, the race for gold, awe of force and submission to that. The League of Nations, we are assured, is changing all that, is doing magnificent work generally, and enjoys the collaboration of upright, conscientious public men. But surely this is no guarantee of Peace. Germany too had the collaboration of the foremost spirits of the world before the war—renowned historians, learned theologians, acute critics, profound philosophers and experienced jurists who studied and probed law to its innermost essence. In a word, culture in that country was at its culminating point. And yet when the great test was applied by circumstance the cultured German people suddenly relapsed into biological beings; frenzied with violent passions and ignoring cultural, religious, and ethical restraints, broke treaties, violated promises, and rushed wildly to the front to slaughter French and Belgians there. I do not mean to suggest that Germany alone was thus transformed, but only that from her, with her exceptional culture and high-minded guides, the metamorphosis was to be least expected. In the same way the League to-day has the valued assistance of the foremost men in the world who are conscientiously endeavoring to end wars on paper. And they have, at any rate, deserved extremely well of their grateful fellows in the sphere of hygiene. But their political

treaties meant to be hindrances of war are known to be genuine scraps of paper which impose no obligation and inspire no confidence. Indeed, they are more harmful than helpful, for a reason that everyone can understand: they consecrate injustice which cannot and will not be tolerated beyond a certain point and will then be redressed by force. The minorities who are being swallowed alive by peace-loving, power-loving, self-loving States are consulted only as to the sauce with which they are to be eaten. Naturally, they nurse their grievances, bide their time, and plan vengeance. The apparent "equitable" give and take established by the countless treaties is just as helpful as would be the resetting of a broken limb without the removal of the bone splinters.

In Europe to-day there are more than ten million Germans cut off from their own people by sheer force, all resolved to reunite as soon as may be. In other countries a like state of things vainly calls for immediate remedial measures; but the only relief offered by the statesmen who are themselves largely responsible for this injustice was to have it solemnly consecrated by treaty and declared sacrosanct, never again to be criticized or questioned! *La chose jugée,* in a word.

If we now turn to the Soviets we are struck with the simplicity and elegance of their way of dealing with the self-same problem. True, the conditions themselves, the number and variety of the peoples concerned, suggested the remedy. Every nationality—and, as we saw, there are 156 all told—is now free to cultivate its language, literature, art, press, pedagogy to its heart's content; and hitherto when it has lacked the needful resources the Central government has stepped in and supplied what was wanting. Hence the many republics and autonomous territories and the formidable array of languages one meets

there. German colonists who lived and languished in Czarist Russia for generations now have their own little autonomous republic on the river Volga, their own administration, and their own laws, schools, and newspaper press. Bashkirs, Tshuvashes, and even the gypsy race—that eternal wanderer among the nations of the earth—has been taken in hand, taught, trained and civilized—or rather given a surface polish, the utmost it would take—by the Bolshevists in the hallowed name of Marxism. In a word, it is claimed that Bolshevism, like Christianity, has come to solace the indigent, the downtrodden workers and peasants; in fact, all the ignorant sections of mankind, and to make common cause with them against capitalists and parasites.

In my opinion, the doctrine of Bolshevism as a cement of nations is unthinkable, except on one most improbable supposition—that the organizers of great trusts, the influential capitalists of the East and the West, and responsible statesmen, agree to transfer their services from their respective countries to that of the community of the world; abolish customs, frontiers, armies, navies, and desist from preparation for war.

Meanwhile, Bolshevism is confronted with many difficulties and dangers. Among the former is an insufficiency of financial resources, one of the consequences of which is the slower pace at which the liquidation of illiteracy is proceeding and the appalling number of people who cannot read or write. Statistics on this subject have been published by the Soviet authorities themselves. Owing to the want of accommodation in the schools multitudes of children are left without guidance, tuition, or supervision. Many of these wretched bairns—aged nine, ten, eleven, or twelve—find employment as aids in farmers' families, where they toil fifteen and sixteen hours a day. Many of them run away from the blows and kicks and general bad treat-

ment they receive. In September they work ten hours in the field, lift heavy sacks on to the shelves of the tractors, and hand over heavy sheaves. At this they sometimes have to drudge twelve hours, for which they are paid fifty copecks (tenpence). Others are taken on in factories in spite of the law forbidding the employment of boys or girls under the age of fourteen. Numerous children of the ages of nine, ten, and eleven are nurses, others are maids of all work with little or no pay, and many make a dash for liberty from this bondage and drift to cities or towns where most of them go under. This soul-searing story, painful though it is for the Soviet authorities, is narrated by them in the form of dry statistics.

Bolshevism's most formidable problems, however, turn upon the peasants and the sectarians. The former are still stone deaf to the siren chants of Marxism and resolved not to barter the produce of the soil, for which they toiled early and late, for the realization of the principles of industrialization and collectivism which many of them fail to appreciate. Hence the difficulty of the fusion between peasants and factory workers without which, according to Lenin, Bolshevism must remain a disembodied dream. Whether it will be this or more we shall learn as soon as the Five Years Scheme has advanced toward the turning point, always assuming that famines and other perilous crises can be averted until then. The religious sectarians, who are now springing up in formidable numbers, believe in God, a devil, in heaven and hell; they owe allegiance in the first instance to the law of God and are absolutely intractable. Bolshevism cannot absorb them, cannot change or modify their nature. War and violence they will not countenance, not even indirectly, and no threats or blandishments have the slightest effect upon them. And to-day they are to be met with everywhere in the Union.

To sum up: the Russia I went to see no longer exists. In fact, it never existed. It was a gross deception like the make-believe cities improvised by the Empress Catherine's minister Potemkin, in order to impose upon his imperial mistress. It was a vast mosaic of nations held together by violence, falsehood, and injustice. To-day in the country once miscalled Russia dwell Marxists, Communists, Ukrainians, Sectarians, etc. Russians of the old type have vanished, but their spirit is still alive and active. The unified laws made by the Czars for all those peoples have been, to a considerable extent, abolished, and each republic has now not only its own language but its own legislation from which only a few subjects are excluded. Centralization is beneficially modified by local self-government. Everywhere people are thinking, working, combining, making scientific discoveries and industrial inventions. If one could obtain a bird's-eye view of the numerous activities of the citizens of the Soviet Republics one would hardly trust the evidence of one's senses. Nothing like it; nothing approaching it in variety, intensity, tenacity of purpose has ever yet been witnessed. Revolutionary endeavor is melting colossal obstacles and fusing heterogeneous elements into one great people; not indeed a nation in the Old World meaning, but a strong people cemented by quasi-religious enthusiasm. Will that new people, with its dissolvent principles and aggressive action, hold its own in the long run against its formidable enemies, some of whom are of its own household, and stem the stream of capitalism? It seems doubtful. Anyhow, I am not qualified to answer this question.

All that an impartial outsider can say with conviction is that if the Soviets keep together and present a united front to the world, they will ultimately succeed in revolutionizing it, even though the Soviet government should vanish.

For the seed is already sown and will bring forth fruit in the appointed season. If the capitalist nations, with all their resources, have failed to crush inchoate Bolshevism by dint of money, arms, and propaganda, in which latter art some of them were uncommonly proficient, how will they fare when pitted against a new race of men trained to pursue their aims relentlessly, persistently, heedless of the restraints, human or divine, that are still supposed to fetter capitalists? Nowhere in the world to-day can one discern constructive action or a great leader. Whatever movement there is peters out in words. Speeches, banquets, negotiations, treaties are the main products of politics, while socially the upper classes are wasting money, and by their disgusting and provocative follies are destroying the bough on which they are perched. Revolutions are usually brought about by those who fear them most.

The Bolshevists then have accomplished much of what they aimed at, and more than seemed attainable by any human organization under the adverse conditions with which they had to cope. They have mobilized well over one hundred and fifty millions of listless dead-and-alive human beings, and infused into them a new spirit. They have wrecked and buried the entire Old World order in one sixth of the globe and are digging graves for it everywhere else. They have shown themselves able and resolved to meet emergency and to fructify opportunity. Their way of dealing with home rule and the nationalities is a masterpiece of ingenuity and elegance. None of the able statesmen of to-day in other lands has attempted to vie with them in their method of satisfying the claims of minorities. In all these and many other enterprises they are moved by a force which is irresistible, almost thaumaturgical.

Bolshevism is no ordinary historic event. It is one of

the vast world cathartic agencies to which we sometimes give the name of Fate, which appear at long intervals to consume the human tares and clear the ground for a new order of men and things. The Hebrews under Moses and Joshua, the Huns under Attila, the Mongols under Djinghis Khan, and the Bolshevists under Lenin, are all tarred with the same transcendental brush. Bolshevism takes its origin in the unplumbed depths of being; nor could it have come into existence were it not for the necessity of putting an end to the injustice and iniquities that infect our superannuated civilization. It is amoral and inexorable because transcendental. It has come, as Christianity came, not for peace but for the sword, and its victims outnumber those of the most sanguinary wars. To me it seems to be the mightiest driving force for good or for evil in the world to-day. It is certainly a stern reality, smelling perhaps of sulphur and brimstone, but with a mission on earth, and a mission which will undoubtedly be fulfilled.

THE END

For many years Dr. Dillon has stood as the leading authority on his adopted land. After spending most of his life in Russia teaching in a Russian university and acting as Russian correspondent for the London Daily Telegraph, he left at the time of the Revolution but returned in 1928 eager to see what had happened. Trained as an observer, he sets down both good and bad. Bolshevism, he thinks, is the mightiest driving force in the world today. In his estimate of Soviet Russia he presents the first impartial and comprehensible picture of Bolshevism at work.

BOLSHEVISM differs from the French Revolution in that it attacks fundamentals like religion and the family, says Dr. Dillon, instead of such superficialities as forms of government. "It is one of the vast world-cathartic agencies which appear at long intervals to clear the ground for a new order of men and things. The Hebrews under Moses, the Huns under Attila, the Mongols under Genghis Khan and the Bolshevists under Lenin are all tarred with the same transcendental brush. To me Bolshevism seems to be the mightiest driving force for good or evil in the world today."

This picture of Russia as it was and is, neither attacks nor defends Bolshevism but is a stimulating and impartial survey of Russia as it actually is.